NEW

Mac

Tips, Tricks, Apps & Hacks

The independent guide to mastering your Apple Mac

FREE OS X APPS
Plus video tutorials, wallpapers & more

Over 500 OS X tips

Welcome to Mac

Tips, Tricks, Apps & Hacks

Whether it's an iMac, a brand new MacBook or a monstrous Mac Pro, Apple's computers are pretty incredible machines. They're capable of almost anything right out of the box, but because everyday tasks like browsing the web and watching videos are made completely effortless on a Mac, sometimes it can be easy to forget what a powerful piece of hardware you're running.

Thankfully Mac Tips, Tricks, Apps & Hacks is here to help you get the absolute most from your Mac. We'll start by taking you through some of the lesser known features of Apple's core apps, from Mail and Safari to Finder and Calendar, before moving on to advanced tricks for the more creative among you. Covering Photos, iMovie, GarageBand and more, we've got everything you need to organise and edit your media like never before.

For the power users out there, our Hacks section shows what you can do when you lift the lid on OS X Yosemite. Apple's platform might seem a little closed off at first, but it really is amazing how much of the system you can customise when you know how. Finally we'll take you through the essential apps you need to download from the App Store. Whether you're using a Mac for business or pleasure, there are countless useful options out there.

Mac Tips, Tricks, Apps & Hacks

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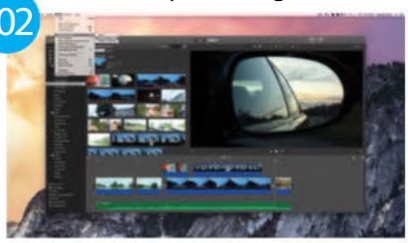

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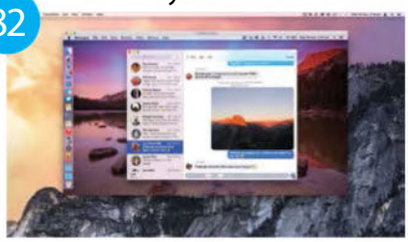

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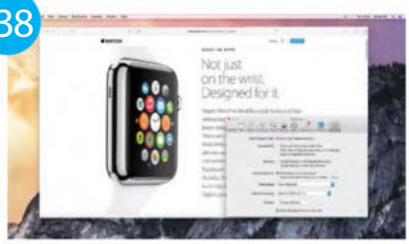

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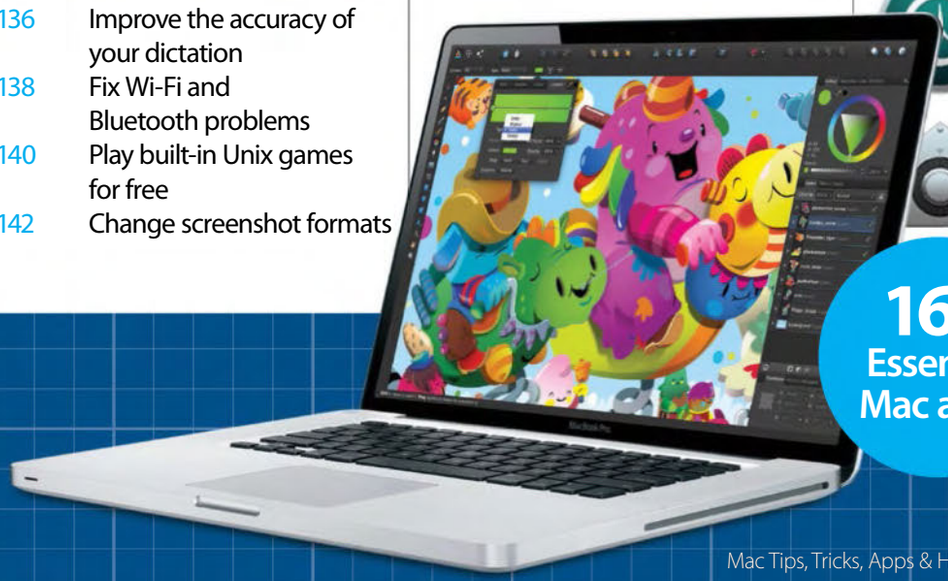


162 Essential Mac apps

BECOME A YOSEMITE GENIUS

Essential tips, tricks and secrets to becoming a Mac expert

A new Mac system is always exciting, but last year's OS X Yosemite was something else. Rather than just incremental updates and extra, unwanted apps, Yosemite changed the whole Mac system with a completely new design and a selection of powerful new features. And for users that want to get more from their Mac, now is the time to do it.

In this feature, we've pulled together pro tips and tricks from across the system, to offer users even more options than ever before. Whether you're a Mac newcomer who only got your first machine a few months ago, or a long-time Apple fanatic who's seen many operating systems come and go, we're sure there's something in this feature that you simply didn't know about. From tips for customising your Mac's appearance to hidden tools to personalise your machine, we've got everything you need to become a complete Mac expert with Yosemite.

Read on and we'll show you how to secure Safari, power up Preview, customise Contacts and more – all with simple techniques that you can try out in just a few minutes. We've even solved some of the most common problems with OS X Yosemite in our troubleshooting guide. You might just save yourself a trip to the Genius Bar by reading on – but be warned, you may also become the go-to Mac expert among your friends and family. With great power comes great responsibility…

Control how OS X's interface looks

Dark mode shortcut

If you don't mind fiddling in Terminal a little, you can input the command in the Spotlight box at the top of this page. This will activate a keyboard shortcut for Dark Mode – Ctrl+Alt+Cmd+T.

Dark Mode

If you're working at night and want to give your eyes a rest, you can activate Dark Mode. Open System Preferences>General and check the box

High contrast

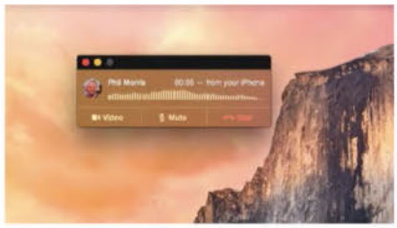
This option makes everything easier to see. It increases the contrast of grey text and lines, and automatically activates the Reduce Transparency option, too

Reduce Transparency

In System Preferences>Accessibility you can reduce transparency. This removes the blur effect around the operating system, which is a good way to speed things up slightly

Handoff iOS work to Mac

Switch between devices



1: Calls anywhere

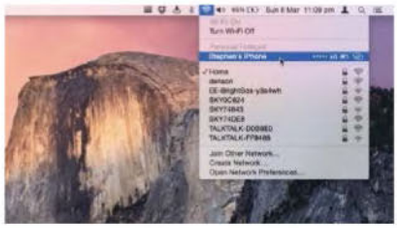
Receive phone calls on your Mac from your iPhone, and use the on-screen controls to switch the call to video if available.

2: App attack

Pick up other apps on your Mac. Leave it open on your iOS device and click the icon that appears on the left of your Dock.

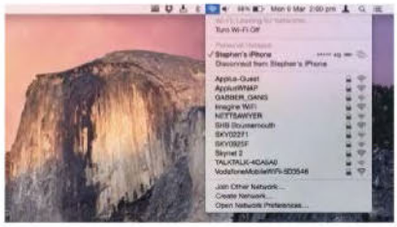
Use mobile data on Mac

Get online anywhere



1: Check status

When your phone is nearby to your Mac, click the Wi-Fi icon in the menu bar to see your phone's signal and battery status.



2: Get connected

Click your iPhone's 3G or 4G network to connect to it. You won't need a password as long as they're the same iCloud account.

Receive files more easily

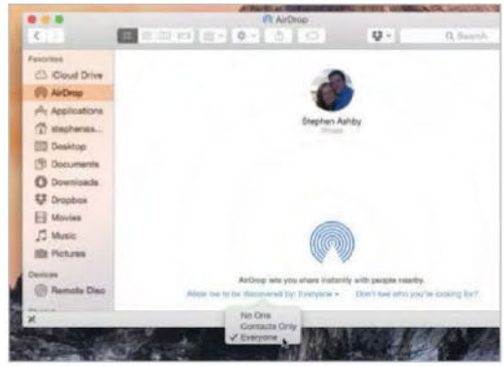
Change AirDrop settings to get files on your Mac instantly

Remember the days of sharing files via USB stick or floppy disk? These days AirDrop makes it incredibly easy to ashare files between Macs, or between your Mac and iOS devices. But to make the process even faster, there are a few handy tips that you can employ to speed up the process so that files are received automatically.

AirDrop | Speed up sharing

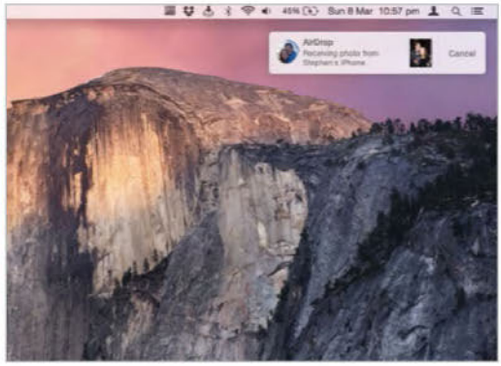
1: Open AirDrop

Open a new Finder window and select AirDrop from the sidebar. If you don't see it, click Finder>Preferences, then choose Sidebar from the top and check the box next to AirDrop.



2: Select availability

At the bottom of the window you'll see two options; choose the first one and make sure it is set to either Contacts Only or Everyone depending on your own particular requirements.



3: Receive anytime

Once you've set this option up, your Mac will always be able to receive files from iOS devices. Just choose to share something from an iPhone or iPad, and you'll see a notification appear.

4: iCloud auto

If you are sharing between two devices that are signed into the same iCloud account, the file will transfer between them automatically without you needing to confirm anything.

Become a web browsing expert

Control cookies, privacy and much more in Safari

Control cookies

For more control over cookies from the websites you visit, Safari is your friend. The Privacy tab in Safari's Preferences lets you enable cookies for all websites, or just the current website you're on

Subscribe to RSS

You can subscribe to RSS feeds in the Safari sidebar – click on the Shared Links tab, then click the Subscriptions button in the bottom-left and select Add Feed. Pick one from your favourites and you're all set

Import data

If you've been using other browsers like Firefox or Google Chrome, you can import all the data from it into Safari so you pick up where you left off without having to lose any of your history

Search with DuckDuckGo

If you want a search engine that doesn't track what you're looking for, DuckDuckGo is the perfect option. Open Safari>Preferences, and then choose DuckDuckGo from the drop-down menu

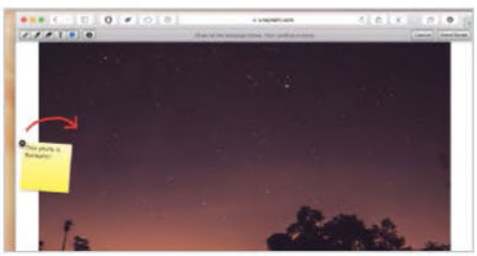
Custom history clearing

While you can clear data from the last hour or day pretty easily, you can also select History>Show History, then select specific history entries you want to get rid of and hit Backspace.

Top three extensions Add extra features to Safari

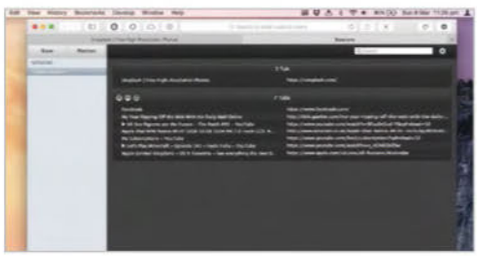
AdBlock

This seems like a no-brainer – the extension blocks annoying Flash-based ads that can eat up memory and slow down webpages.



Coda Notes

This extension adds similar functionality to Markup in Mail – you can add notes and write on a webpage, then share a screenshot.



Sessions

If you're working on multiple projects at once, Sessions helps you save groups of tabs as a session. You can save them, then open them again later.

Explore Finder's hidden features

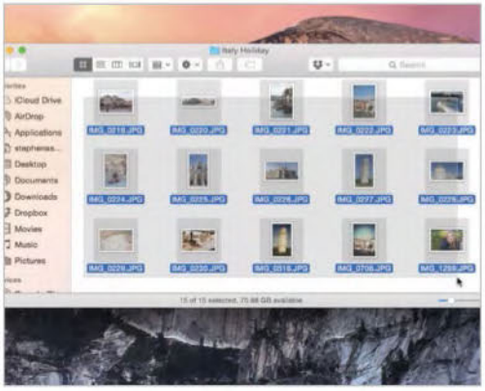
Make this essential app even smarter

Finder is the one Mac app that never gets enough praise. It might appear to be a basic file management system, but it hides a huge amount of power. In fact, we'd go so far as to say that Finder is one of the biggest reasons why we love Macs more than alternative systems. It's clean and easy to use, but it has plenty of great features that you may not know about – and Apple added even more with OS X Yosemite.

Calendar locations

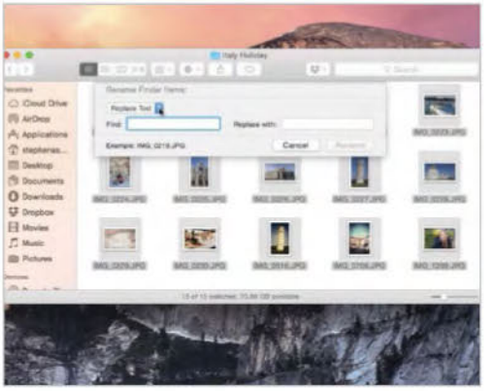
You can add a location to an event in Calendar and the location will be added via Apple's Maps app. Once this has been added, you can see the travel time from your current location too. Very handy.

Finder | Organise files faster



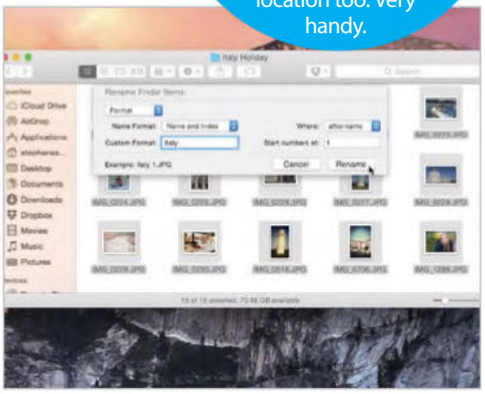
1: Select files

You can rename groups of files quickly, all at once. To get started, click and drag to select multiple files, or hold the Cmd button as you click individual files to pick them.



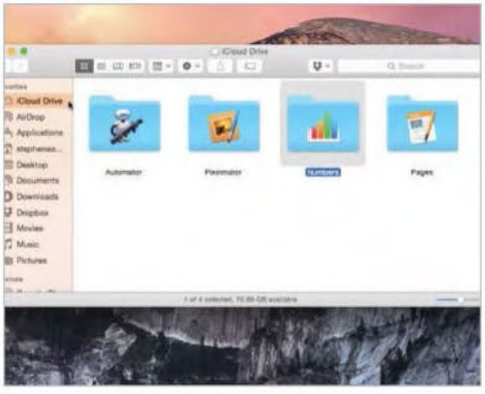
2: Choose a name

Right-click on any file and choose Rename XX Items from the pop-up. You'll see a new menu appear. Use the drop-down to select the style of name you want to give the files.



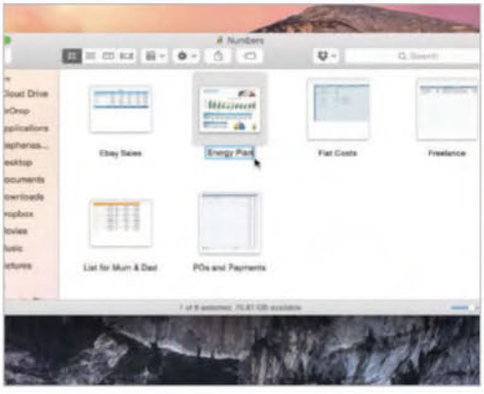
3: Select your options

We've chosen the Format option. This allows us to choose the format of the name we're giving the files. Check the preview of the file name in the bottom-left and hit Rename.



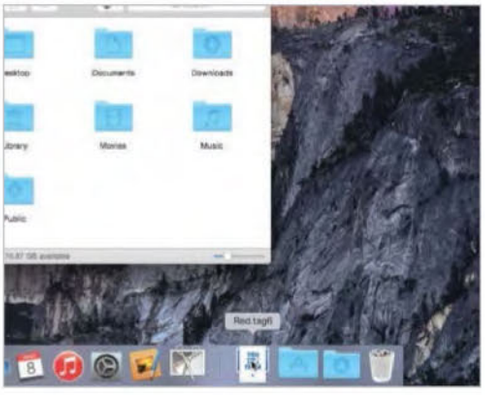
4: Customise iCloud Drive

If you use iCloud Drive, save files to the cloud, and access them on any device. Click iCloud Drive in the sidebar to see folders for each app you use on Mac and iOS.



5: Edit your files

iCloud Drive acts like any other folder. This is incredibly useful if you have an iOS app with iCloud Drive and want to manage all your files without having to use the touch screen.

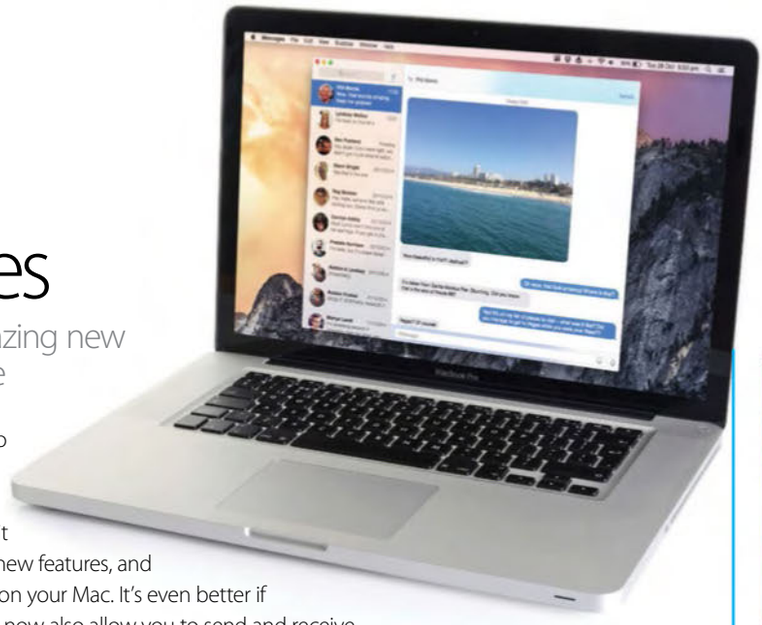


6: Dock your tags

To help you access files even quicker, add a tag to your Dock simply by dragging and dropping it from the Finder sidebar. You can then click to see all your tagged files.

Master Messages

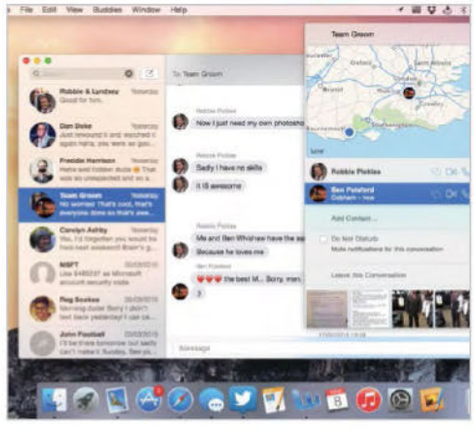
Messages gets amazing new features in Yosemite



One of the apps to get the biggest upgrade in OS X Yosemite was Messages – it gained a selection of useful new features, and is now one of the best apps on your Mac. It's even better if you have an iPhone, as it will now also allow you to send and receive text messages with your Mac, and all you need to do is set it up on your iOS device. Here, we've picked out some of the lesser-known features for you to try.

1: Share your screen

This is incredibly handy if the friend you're messaging has a Mac. You can share your screen, or ask to share theirs, from the Details menu. You can highlight parts of the screen and even control their Mac, if they allow you.

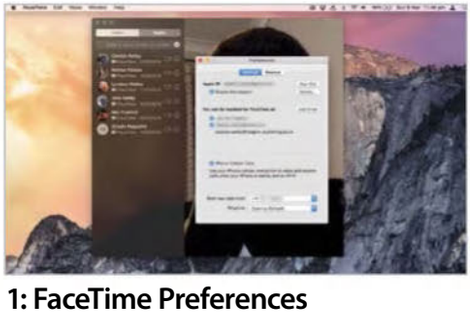


2: Control group messages

If you're chatting with a group of friends via iMessage, there are a few useful things you can do. First off, you can see who's included, change the name of the conversation and even share your location with other members.

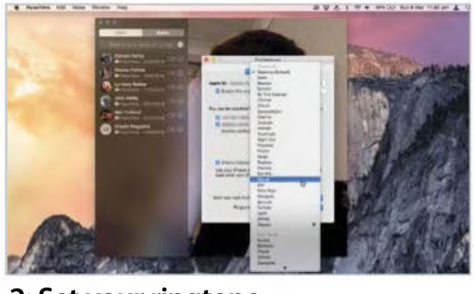
Chat smarter with FaceTime

FaceTime has been redesigned for OS X Yosemite, and it's more useful than ever. As well as the option to return FaceTime calls that you missed on your iPhone via your Mac, you can also change the ringtone within the app.



1: FaceTime Preferences

Open up FaceTime and click FaceTime in the menu bar, then choose Preferences. In the Settings tab, click the Ringtone option.

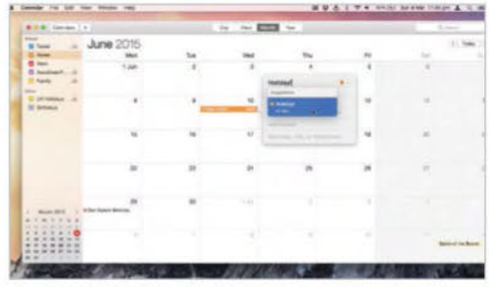


2: Set your ringtone

Pick a tone from any of the new options added in Yosemite, or select one of the previous options from the Classic section.

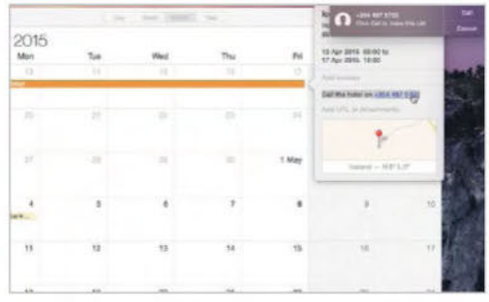
Power up Calendar

Learn how to autofill events and dial numbers



1: Autofill events

If you've got events that happen regularly, once you've entered it once all you need to do is start typing and it will appear as an option. Click it to autofill the information.

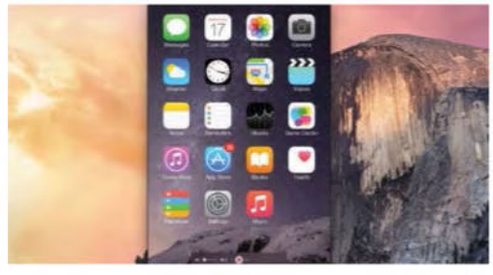


2: Dial numbers

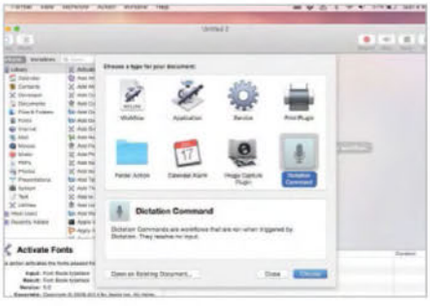
If you add a phone number in the Notes section of an event, Calendar will recognise the number. If your iPhone is nearby, you can call the number from your Mac just by clicking it.

Record your iPhone screen

One of the great new features in the Yosemite update was the option to record your iPhone's screen with QuickTime on your Mac. Plug in your iPhone with the Lightning cable, open QuickTime and click File>New Movie Recording, selecting your iPhone in the drop-down menu that appears.

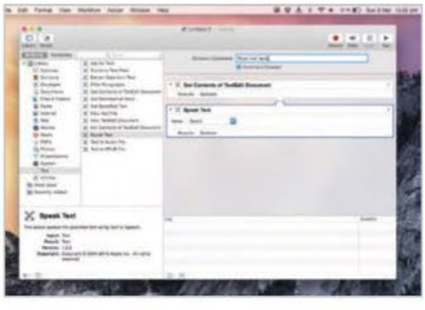


Create voice-activated commands



1: Choose Dictation

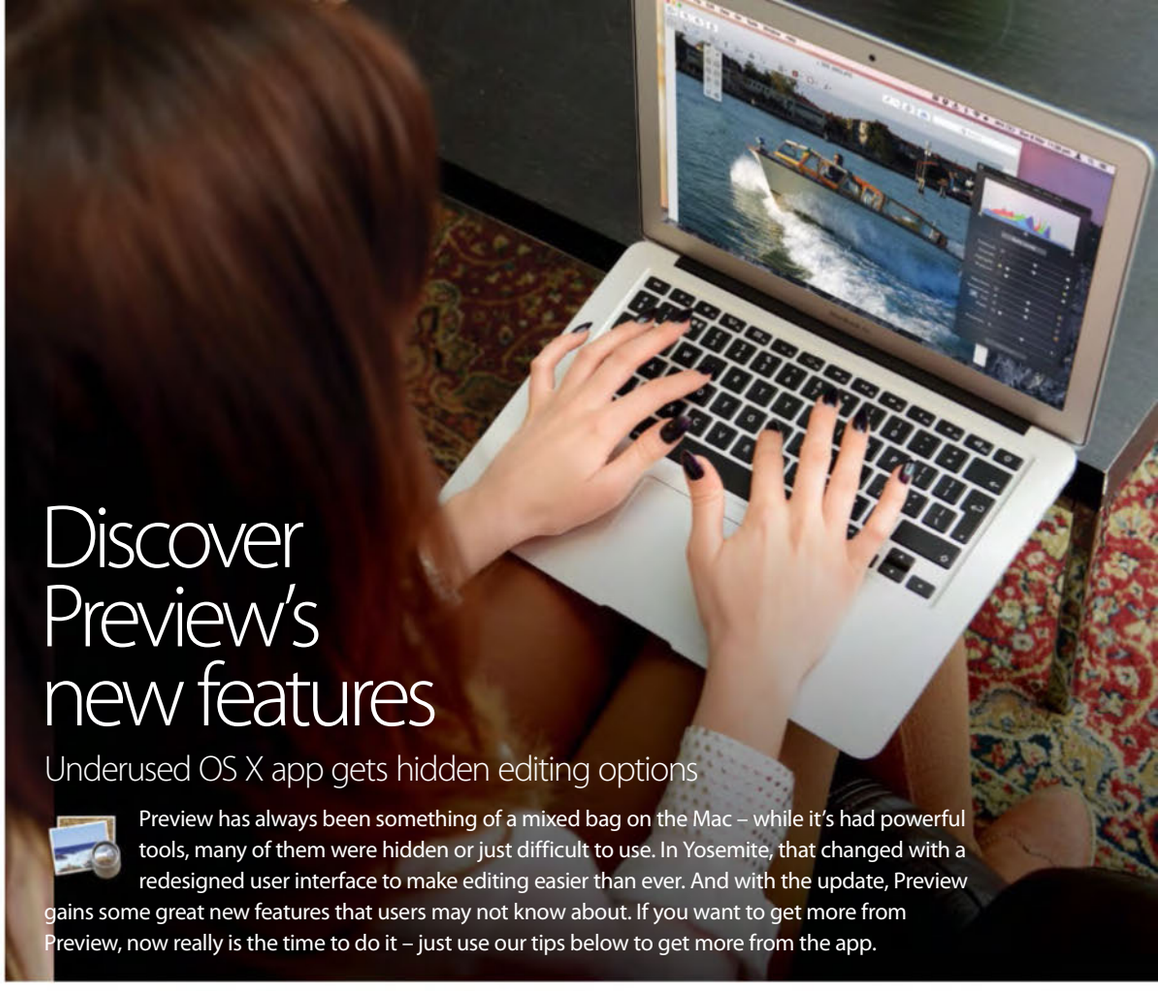
You can now create commands that are activated when you speak a command in Dictation mode. In Automator, create a new workflow and then select the Dictation Command option.



2: Type and add

Type the command you want to speak to activate the workflow, then add actions to complete the task. When you hit Save you can then start the workflow by activating Dictation and saying your command.

"Preview gains some great new Yosemite features"

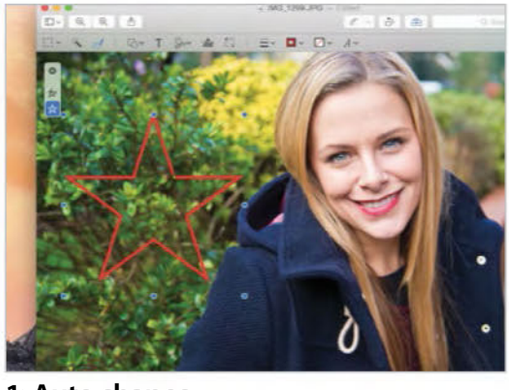


Discover Preview's new features

Underused OS X app gets hidden editing options

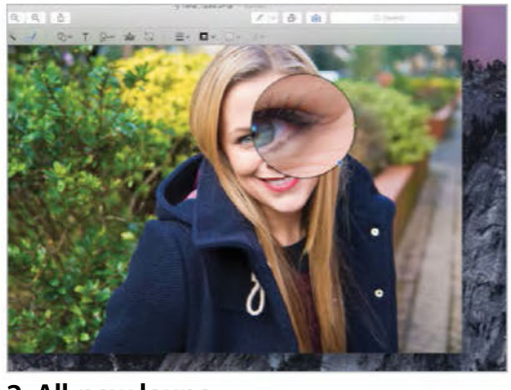
Preview has always been something of a mixed bag on the Mac – while it's had powerful tools, many of them were hidden or just difficult to use. In Yosemite, that changed with a redesigned user interface to make editing easier than ever. And with the update, Preview gains some great new features that users may not know about. If you want to get more from Preview, now really is the time to do it – just use our tips below to get more from the app.

Preview | Mark up images



1: Auto shapes

Add shapes and notes to your documents and photos using the drop-down menu, or go one better and use the Pen tool to sketch a custom shape. Preview will change it automatically.



2: All-new loupe

You can use a loupe on your shot to zoom in on a particular section. Just click it in the menu to add it, then you can resize it and alter the zoom with the green and blue controls.

Essential keyboard shortcuts

Make the most of these hidden key combinations

Keyboard shortcuts can really speed up everyday use on your Mac. Often they will save you lots of clicks, carrying out a command that would normally need you to open a menu and scroll through to choose an option. Here we've gathered some of our favourites to help you speed up your Mac usage.

ctrl + ⏏ Or (on a MacBook) ctrl + ⏻

This one is ideal for quickly getting options for powering down your Mac, as it will bring up the Power Options dialog. From here, hit S to put your Mac to sleep, R to restart, or Enter to shut down.

ctrl + Shift + ⌘ + 4

This screenshot option allows you to draw a box on your screen – only what's inside that box will be captured. Once in this mode, hit Spacebar and you can click on any window to grab the whole thing.

alt + ⌘ + I

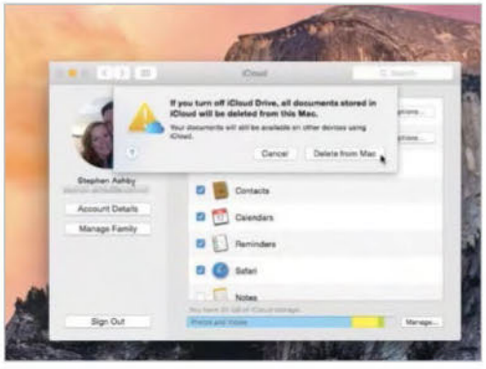
In Finder, this opens the File Inspector – it's very similar to the Get Info box, but as you click on other items in Finder it will update to give you information about whatever is selected. A very handy option.

Troubleshoot your Yosemite problems

Auto updates

Often, updating your Mac and apps to the latest versions will solve common bugs. Turn on Automatic Software Updates in System Preferences to ensure that you're always up to date.

I can't get Handoff set up properly – what's going on?



First, try logging out of iCloud on both devices through System Preferences on your Mac and Settings on iOS. Then turn off Bluetooth and Wi-Fi on your Mac, and restart it. When it restarts, switch them both back on again.

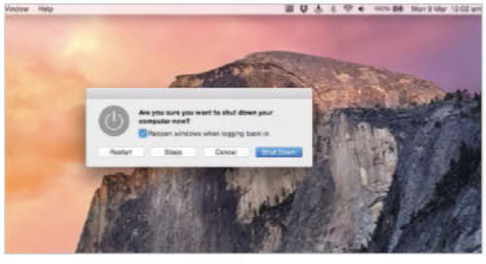
Log back into iCloud on both of your devices, and once the sign-in has been verified, open up System Preferences on your Mac. Choose the General section and ensure that the Allow Handoff box is checked. This should fix it.

I'm having issues with deleting messages in Mail. Help!

A new Yosemite setting may have caused your problem, so disabling it should help. Open Mail's Preferences window and check that your email details are all still correct, then choose the Advanced tab and uncheck the box marked Automatically Detect and Maintain Account Settings. It's this small but sometimes inconvenient feature that has probably been giving you mail syncing issues.

Why isn't my Bluetooth working?

This might sound odd, but it's a solution that's worked for some. First, unplug all USB devices from your Mac, including mice and keyboards if they use USB connections.



Switch off your Mac and unplug the power cord for a few minutes, then plug it back in and switch it on. Connect your devices again if required and check Bluetooth – it should be working again!

My Mac is running really slow and I don't know why!

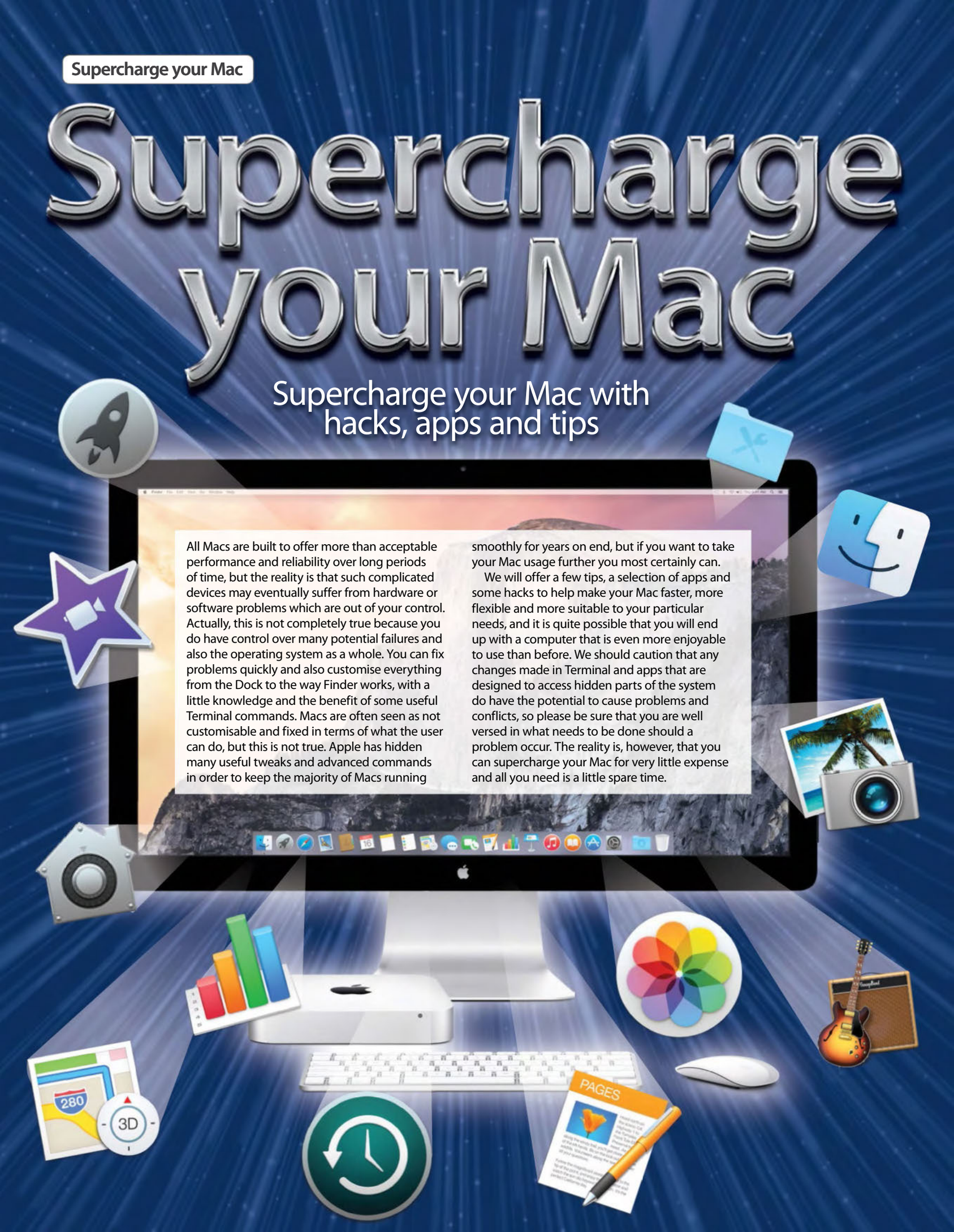
There may be some apps running in the background that you don't know about. Open Activity Monitor and have a look at any apps that are taking up a large percentage of your CPU. Quit the processes to boost performance. It's also worth checking System Preferences>Users & Groups>Login Items and removing unwanted apps from the list.

Why won't AirDrop work?

Good question – it could be any number of reasons, but here are a couple of solutions for the most common causes. First, ensure both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are enabled on both devices. Second, for older Macs, you may need to tell your machine to search for older devices.

Supercharge your Mac

Supercharge your Mac with hacks, apps and tips



All Macs are built to offer more than acceptable performance and reliability over long periods of time, but the reality is that such complicated devices may eventually suffer from hardware or software problems which are out of your control. Actually, this is not completely true because you do have control over many potential failures and also the operating system as a whole. You can fix problems quickly and also customise everything from the Dock to the way Finder works, with a little knowledge and the benefit of some useful Terminal commands. Macs are often seen as not customisable and fixed in terms of what the user can do, but this is not true. Apple has hidden many useful tweaks and advanced commands in order to keep the majority of Macs running smoothly for years on end, but if you want to take your Mac usage further you most certainly can.

We will offer a few tips, a selection of apps and some hacks to help make your Mac faster, more flexible and more suitable to your particular needs, and it is quite possible that you will end up with a computer that is even more enjoyable to use than before. We should caution that any changes made in Terminal and apps that are designed to access hidden parts of the system do have the potential to cause problems and conflicts, so please be sure that you are well versed in what needs to be done should a problem occur. The reality is, however, that you can supercharge your Mac for very little expense and all you need is a little spare time.

Automate common actions

Use apps to undertake tasks and set default locations for files

The ability to take the repetitiveness away from your daily tasks is possible on a Mac thanks to an app called Alfred. It lets you use published workflows to complete tasks with just one click and there really is no limit to what you will be able to accomplish. You can also deal with minor annoyances such as where some apps save files, using just a Terminal command, which should also save you many clicks. It takes a moment to speed up your Mac usage.

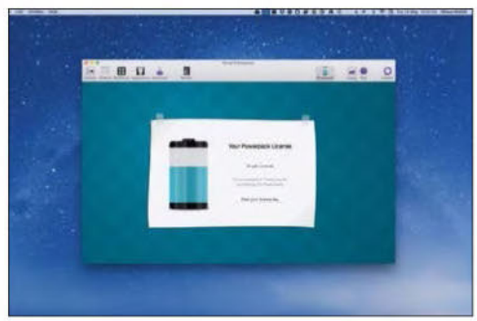
Copy work automatically

Using 'ditto' in Terminal lets you copy files in a folder to a new folder with just one command. If you enter 'ditto -V /old/files/ / new/files/', the content can be moved to a new drive instantly.

Alfred | Use Alfred to undertake tasks

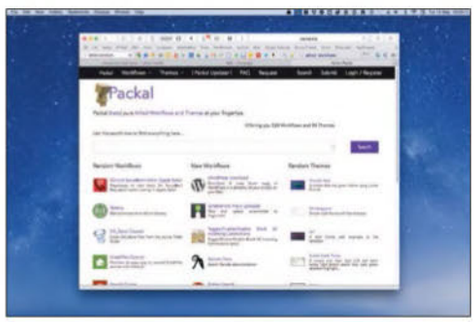
1: Download the app

Point your web browser to **www.alfredapp.com** and download Alfred 2. It is free, but you will need to purchase the optional Powerpack to use workflows in Alfred.



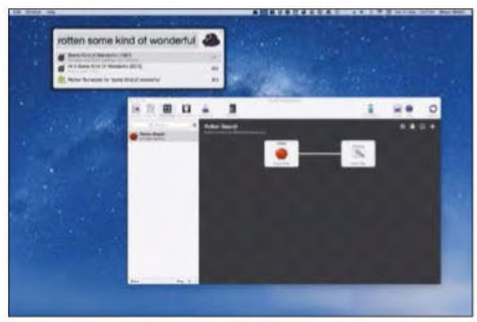
2: Buy the Powerpack

Purchase the Powerpack and then paste the activation code in the screen below the Powerpack tab. It will confirm when it is activated and you are now ready.



3: Find new workflows

Go to **www.packal.org** and search for Alfred workflows. When you find one that looks good, download it and then double-click it to preview the workflow.



4: Use the workflow

You can now follow the instructions and use the workflow, once it has been imported into Alfred. Most of the hard work is done for you by the developer.

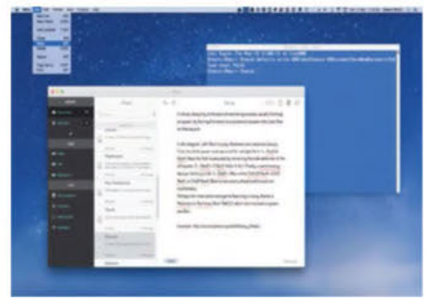
Avoid iCloud

Stop apps from saving to iCloud by default

Some apps are designed to save to iCloud by default, above all other options. However, you can change this situation by using one simple Terminal command which saves files to your Mac's local storage.

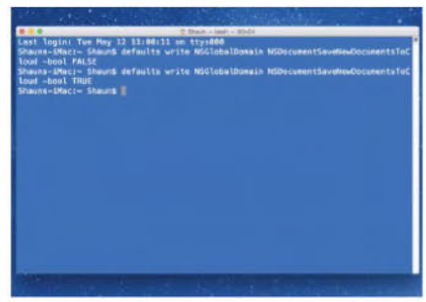
1: Use the command

To stop apps saving to iCloud, open Terminal and enter 'defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSDocumentSaveNewDocumentsToCloud -bool FALSE'.



2: Close iCloud apps

You will need to quit any apps that use iCloud for the change to take effect, but the next time you save a document it will be directed to your Mac disk by default.



3: Undo your changes

To revert back to iCloud saving by default, enter 'defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSDocumentSaveNewDocumentsToCloud -bool TRUE' in Terminal.

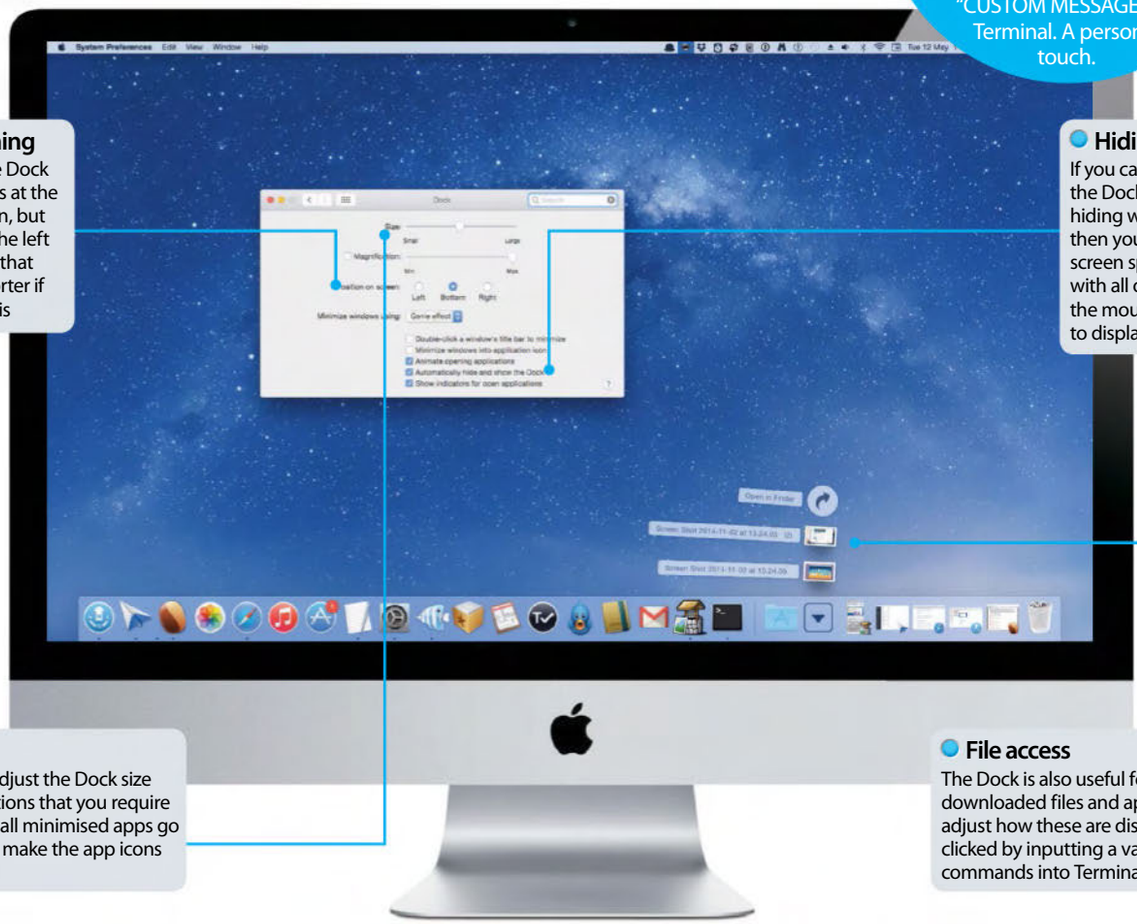
Customise the Dock

Make the Mac OS X Dock work for you

The Dock can be a very important part of your Mac OS X usage and there are a number of simple changes that can be made in Preferences to make it work the way you prefer. Most of these changes only require one click, but if you want to dig deeper, there are a number of Terminal commands that can be used to adjust almost every aspect of the way it works and how it looks. A truly personalised Dock will be much more efficient during Mac usage and will fit the way you prefer to use your Mac every day.

Custom login messages

You can add a custom message to the Mac login window by entering 'sudo defaults write /Library/Preferences/com.apple.loginwindow LoginwindowText "CUSTOM MESSAGE" ' in Terminal. A personal touch.



Dock positioning

For most people the Dock works best when it is at the bottom of the screen, but you can move it to the left or right. Remember that the Dock will be shorter if you choose to do this

Hiding

If you can get used to the Dock automatically hiding when not in use, then you will have more screen space to work with all of the time. Move the mouse to the bottom to display it again

Dock sizing

Take some time to adjust the Dock size to the exact proportions that you require and remember that all minimised apps go to the Dock and will make the app icons smaller than normal

File access

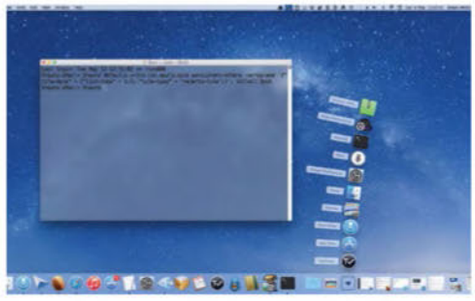
The Dock is also useful for dealing with downloaded files and apps. You can adjust how these are displayed when clicked by inputting a variety of clever commands into Terminal

Add Dock stacks

Create extra Dock stacks

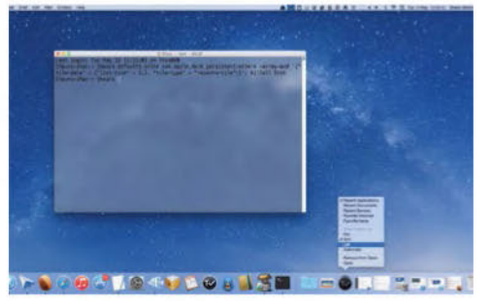
One single command in Terminal will let you create a new 'stack' in the Dock which can display almost anything you like. Recent apps are shown by default, but you can also see recently used documents and even accessed servers. The Dock is for much more than just accessing apps because it can be used to greatly speed up file and document access.

"Speed up file and document access"



1: A recents stack

Open up Terminal and enter the command 'defaults write com.apple.dock persistent-others -array-add '{ "tile-data" = { "list-type" = 1; }; "tile-type" = "recents-tile"; }'. Then enter 'killall Dock'.



2: Customise the stack

Right-clicking the stack will enable you to select exactly how it is presented and you can also choose to view recent documents, servers and volumes, as well as apps.

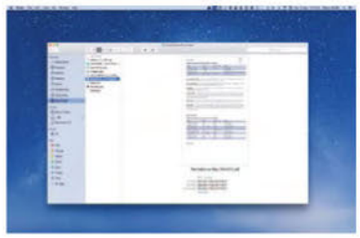
Manage standard features

Tweak and benefit from very useful hidden features in Mac OS X

You do not have to simply accept the way many of the main features of Mac OS X work, because there are lots of hidden uses that may become staple features for you. We will highlight a particularly useful Finder feature and also show you how to customise other areas of the system that you may have considered off limits previously. With a little bit of knowledge and a helping hand, it is perfectly possible to customise almost every important area of Mac OS X to suit your particular needs perfectly.

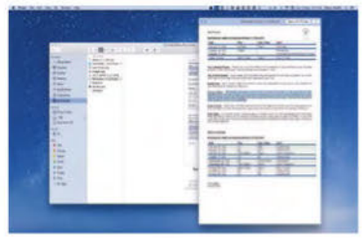
Quick Look selections

You can preview most files in Finder and also use the included data without ever needing to open another app. It makes the Finder app more powerful and your general Mac usage much more efficient. Here we detail how to use the handy Quick Look feature.



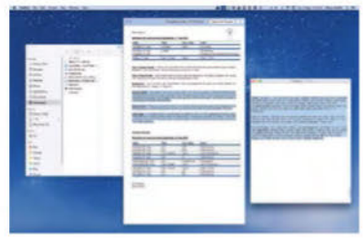
1: Choose a file

In Finder, select a file and you will see a preview of it in the right-hand panel. Most of the detail you need is there, but you cannot interact with it.



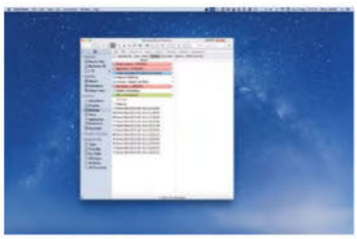
2: The space bar

With the file selected, press the space bar and the Quick Look window will then appear; the text within it can be selected and copied.



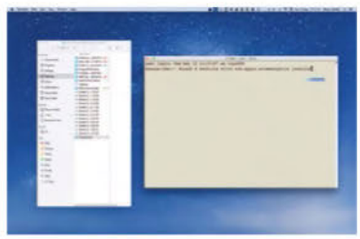
3: Use the content

You can now keep the selected text in the clipboard and then paste it into another open app. This process works for most documents that include text.



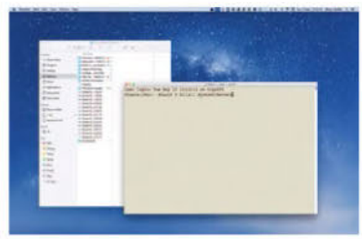
1: A long list

When taking screenshots, it doesn't take long for the Desktop folder to become cluttered and difficult to manage, but there is a solution.



2: A new location

In Terminal, type 'defaults write com.apple.screencapture location'. Now drag the desired folder to the end of the line, then press Enter.



3: One more line

Now enter 'killall SystemUIServer' in Terminal and any future screenshots should be saved to your chosen location. It will make everything tidier.

Screenshot locations

Screenshots are a necessary part of computing life for many people, but they can clog up the desktop very quickly, since by default they are set to be saved there. You can, however, change where they are saved to with just a single command in Terminal.

Remove the Dashboard

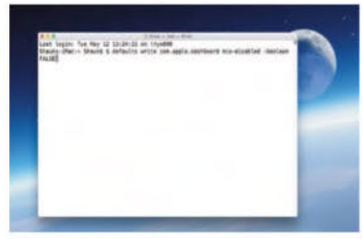
The Dashboard feature will either be seen as a must-have option to quickly access certain functions or an annoyance that often gets activated accidentally. If the latter is the case for you, there is a way to disable the Dashboard forever if you like.

1: Easy to enable

One criticism of Dashboard is that it is too easy to enable when typing. All you need to do is accidentally tap the wrong key and it appears.

2: Disable the Dashboard

Open Terminal and enter 'defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean TRUE' to disable the Dashboard permanently.



3: Change your mind

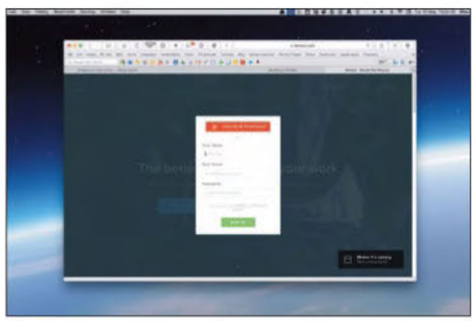
If you change your mind and want to use the Dashboard again, enter 'defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean FALSE'.

Send files instantly

Cut out the apps and clicks, and send files by email in an instant

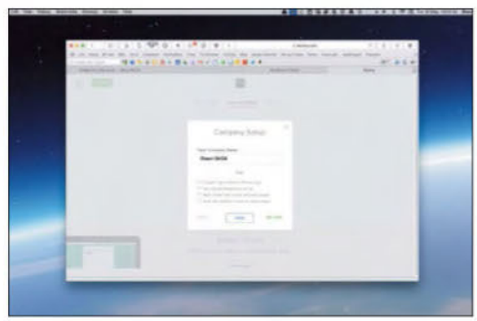
Consider how you currently share files with friends and colleagues over email and, if possible, try to count the steps you have to go through. It can involve opening the Mail app, selecting files, choosing a contact and doing all sorts of other things, just to complete what should be a simple task, but with Minbox you can change all of this and share files by email with almost no hassle at all. You will be required to give over some personal information, but once you have signed up, there will be an icon available for you to simply drag files to and send. You don't always need to spend time hacking and adding new commands to Mac OS X when there is an app that can already do it all for you.

Minbox | Share files from the desktop



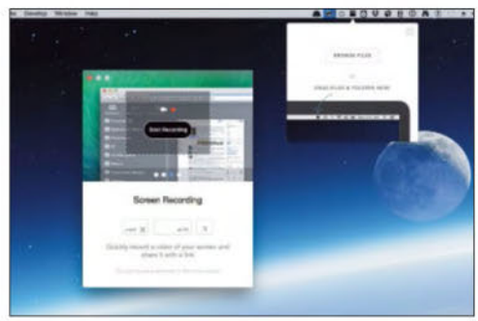
1: Signing up

Point your web browser to **minbox.com** and decide how you would like to sign up. You can use a Google account or input your details manually. Either way will work fine.



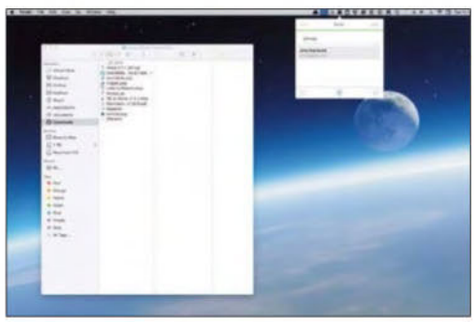
2: Your personal setup

Spend some time customising the Minbox service so that recipients will realise that the sent files have come from you. You may well be using this service a lot in the future.



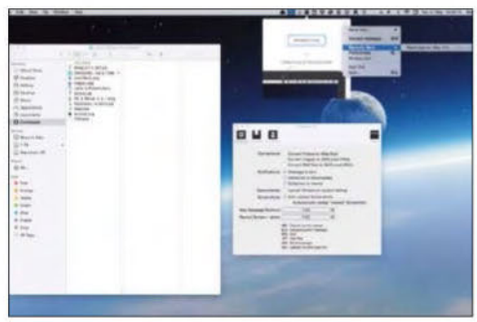
3: It's ready

Download the Mac app as instructed and enter your Minbox account details after opening it. You will see a new icon in the status bar and an example screen.



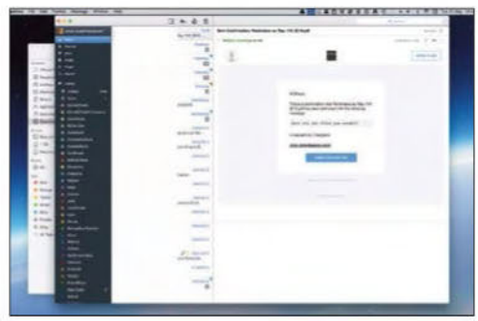
4: Time to share

Select any file within Finder and drag it to the Minbox icon in the status bar at the top. A window will appear asking you to choose a contact. Select a recipient.



5: It's sent!

Once the file has been uploaded successfully, it will be sent without the need to open any other apps. It's a very efficient process which works well and saves you time and effort.



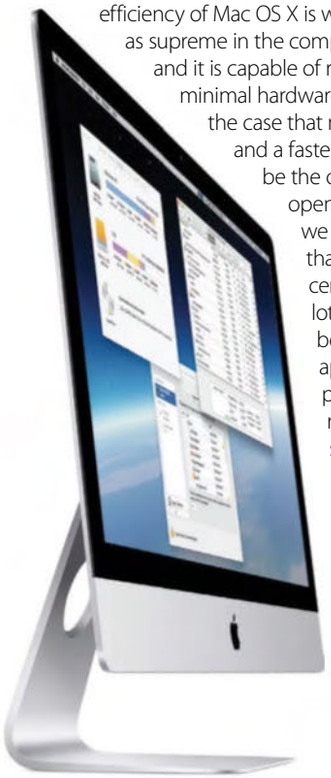
6: The sharing confirmation

Every time a file is shared, you will receive an email to the account you signed up with, showing details of the shared files and also the recipient. Security is key here.

Speed up your Mac

It takes very little effort to greatly speed up your Mac

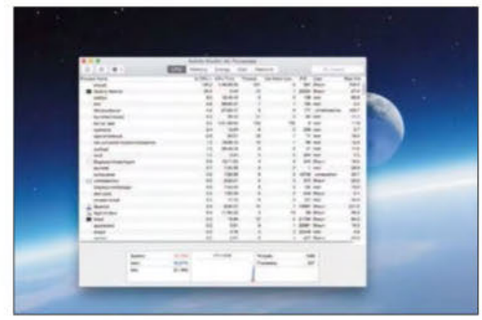
All computers get slower over time and despite the fact that Macs tend to suffer less than the equivalent Windows computers, some negative effects may still become apparent over long periods. The temptation to throw out the old and spend a lot of money on a new Mac is great, but you really should try some simple solutions first to see if they solve your current problems and make your current Mac feel like new again. The efficiency of Mac OS X is widely regarded as supreme in the computing world and it is capable of running on minimal hardware, so it is rarely the case that more memory and a faster processor will be the only solutions open to you, but we will admit that they can certainly help a lot. Finally, don't be fooled by apps claiming to produce miracle results, because sometimes they just mask the underlying problems and can actually make performance over time even worse.



Activity Monitor | Optimise your Mac

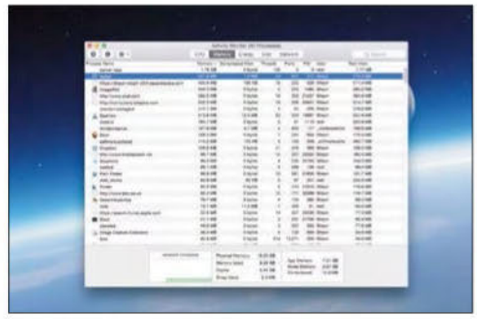
1: Uninstall apps properly

Go to **www.freemacsoft.net/appcleaner** and install AppCleaner. This really useful tool lets you uninstall apps and ensures that all of the junk files are also removed.



2: Deal with activities

Open up Activity Monitor in Applications>Utilities and then click the CPU tab. If your Mac is running slow, order the list by %CPU and click the 'x' icon to quit CPU hogs.



3: Free up RAM

Sometimes an app will lose control and use much more RAM than it should. Click the Memory tab in Activity Monitor to see how much RAM is available and how much each app is using.

4: Disable login items

Go to Preferences>Users & Groups and click the Login Items tab. Uncheck any apps and services you don't need to run all of the time, to stop them starting at boot-up.

> "Some simple solutions may solve your current problems and make your Mac feel like new again"

Solid state speed

If you have the knowledge and the funds to purchase an external solid-state disk, you can use it for start-up items and many other tasks. The performance improvements will be quite unbelievable.

Performance-improving apps

Some utility apps can help you get over Mac performance problems

1: Disk Map

Disk Map takes some time to work with, but the results are enlightening and will potentially save you money. It lets you see how every single file is using space on your Mac.

2: Memory Clean

Apps like Memory Clean are useful for getting you over a hump when you need to work, but remember that they will not permanently solve problems with a lack of free RAM.

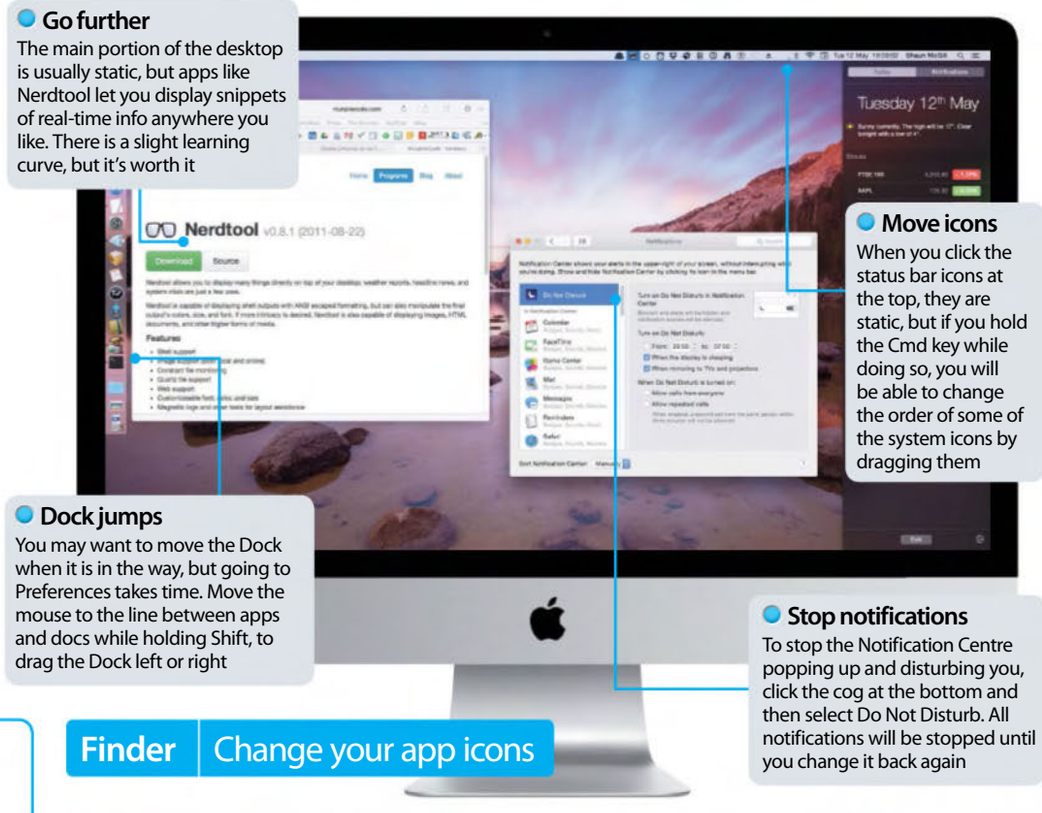
3: WiFi Explorer

Performance problems can also be caused by internet connectivity issues and an app like WiFi Explorer will help you to visually see where the route of the problem may be.

Customise the desktop

Change how your Mac looks and operates

Considering how much time most of us spend using our Macs, chances are that you'll spend hours every week looking at your desktop. With that in mind, you want to make sure that everything is as attractive, and as conveniently located, as it can possibly be. Thankfully, there are several tweaks available for anyone looking to customise their desktop. These range from purely superficial changes to make your Mac a little more easy on the eyes, to some more fundamental alterations which can save you precious seconds every time you load up the desktop. Trust us, they soon add up.



Go further
The main portion of the desktop is usually static, but apps like Nerdtool let you display snippets of real-time info anywhere you like. There is a slight learning curve, but it's worth it

Move icons
When you click the status bar icons at the top, they are static, but if you hold the Cmd key while doing so, you will be able to change the order of some of the system icons by dragging them

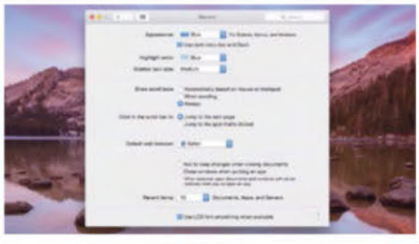
Dock jumps
You may want to move the Dock when it is in the way, but going to Preferences takes time. Move the mouse to the line between apps and docs while holding Shift, to drag the Dock left or right

Stop notifications
To stop the Notification Centre popping up and disturbing you, click the cog at the bottom and then select Do Not Disturb. All notifications will be stopped until you change it back again

Final quick changes

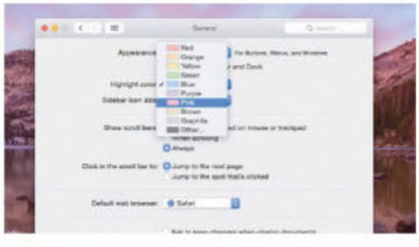
Tweak your desktop's look with some small flourishes

There are a couple of other changes you can make to truly make your desktop your own, and they're incredibly easy to find.



1: Light to dark

Open System Preferences and navigate to General. Here you will see settings, one of which is called 'Use dark menu bar and Dock'. Click it to make the status bar dark.



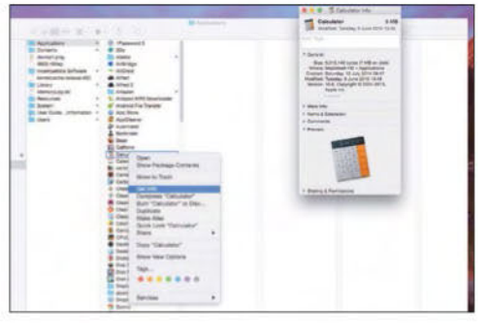
2: Change menu colours

The top two boxes let you change the general appearance to blue or graphite, and the highlight colour to any of your choosing. These small changes have an impact.

Finder | Change your app icons

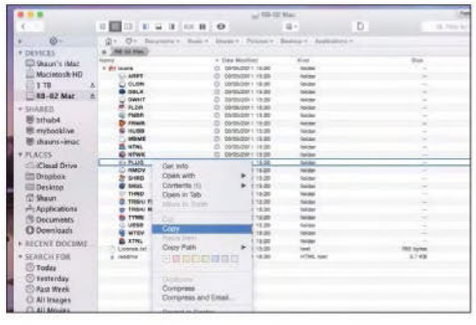
1: Find some icons

There are many repositories on the web which offer Mac icons, including **https://iconarchive.com**. Take time to find a set of icons that you like and then download it.



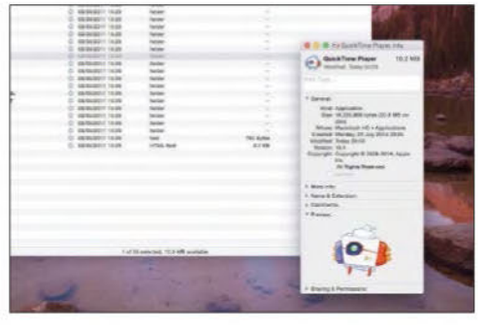
2: Choose an app

In Finder, go to the Applications folder and then right-click an app. Now choose the Get Info menu option to bring up a panel offering detailed app-related information.



3: Copy an icon

Open the folder containing the icons that you have previously downloaded and copy one of them while the Get Info panel is still open on the desktop.



4: The new icon

Now click the icon at the top of the Get Info panel and then use Cmd+V to paste in the icon you copied previously. You now have a brand new icon for your app.

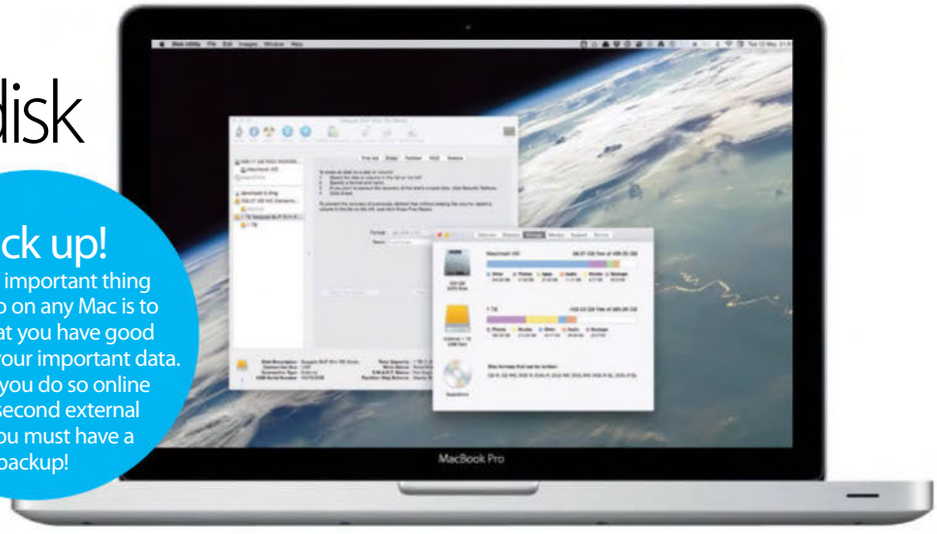
Manage your Mac disk

Keep your Mac hard drive running smoothly and reliably every day

The importance of Mac disks cannot be underestimated for a number of reasons. They are of course responsible for storing your files and data, and also have a huge impact on device performance, so regular checks and the quick resolution of problems are vital for ensuring that your Mac works smoothly every day. There are symptoms to look out for and tools built into Mac OS X to help, so hopefully we should be able to help you keep your disks running perfectly no matter what type of problem appears.

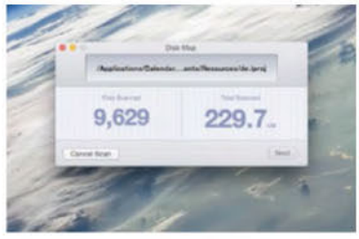
Back up!

The most important thing you can do on any Mac is to ensure that you have good backups of your important data. Whether you do so online or via a second external drive, you must have a backup!



Free up space

You need to know what exactly is using space on your hard drive in order to give it room to breathe, and Mac Disk is a useful app for this task. Download it from the Mac App Store and we will show you how to get started on navigating your disk and finding out just what is taking up all that room.

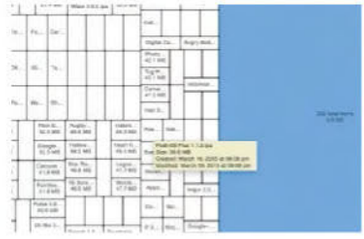


1: Scan your disk

Click the '+' icon on the first screen and select a folder from the resultant window, such as Macintosh HD. Click on Next and the scan will begin.

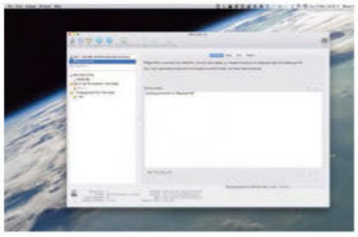
2: A disk map

When the scan has finished, click Next and you will see a visual map of your disk. You can now select individual files and delete them as required.



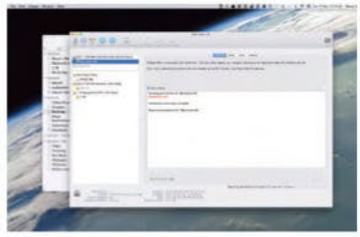
3: Digging deeper

Double-click on any square to see what is in the folder, which may be quite revealing. You can delete and view every file on your disk in minutes.



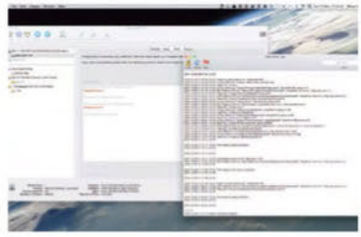
1: Verify the permissions

Select the disk that you are having problems with and click Verify Disk Permissions. It could take some time to complete, but it is essential.



2: Repair the permissions

Once the disk verification has completed, you will want to run Repair Disk Permissions to fix any errors that pop up. Errors may now disappear.



3: Use the log

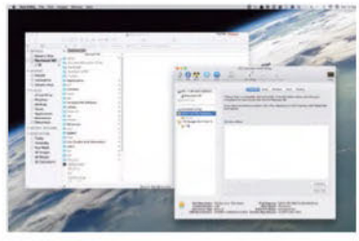
Click the top-right Log icon to view a complete history of changes you have made within Disk Utility. This may help diagnose current disk problems.

Deal with problems

The very first thing that you should do if you run into any problems that appear to be disk related is to head over to Utilities and open the Disk Utility application. It is a complete solution which covers a multitude of problems, so chances are it has you covered.

Select colours super-fast

Unfortunately, an external drive can fail at any time and for a vast multitude of reasons. If it's not immediately apparent, finding the problem may require a little detective work and some knowledge to in order to fix it and to maintain reliable performance.

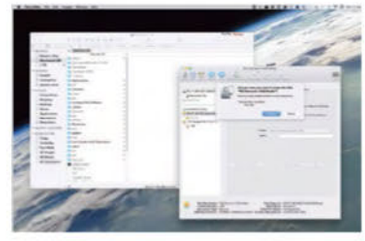


1: Where is it?

If using a USB-powered external disk, it may not always appear in Finder. If it shows in Disk Utility, it may be underpowered. Time to return it.

2: You need space

Don't underestimate the need for free memory on your external disk and the internal hard drive. If very little is free, a myriad of problems can occur.



3: The last resort

If all else fails, back up the files to another hard drive and use Disk Utility to erase the external drive. This often brings a failing disk back to life.

Tips

Take advantage of the core apps in OS X Yosemite

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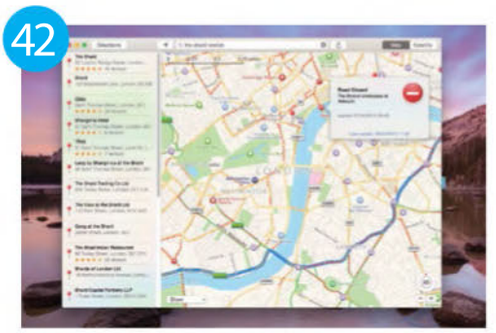

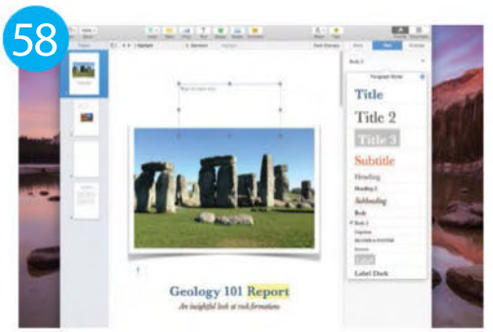

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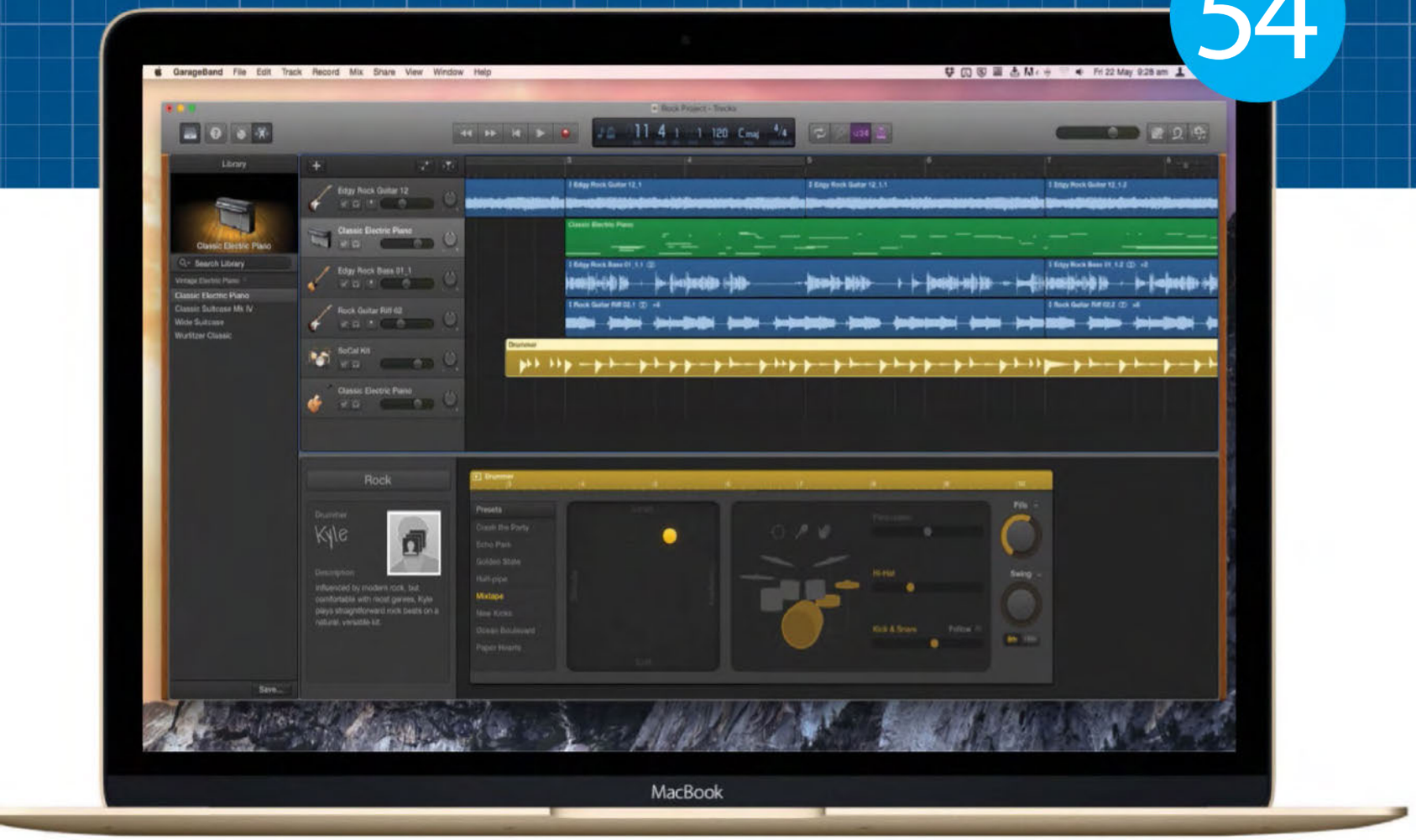

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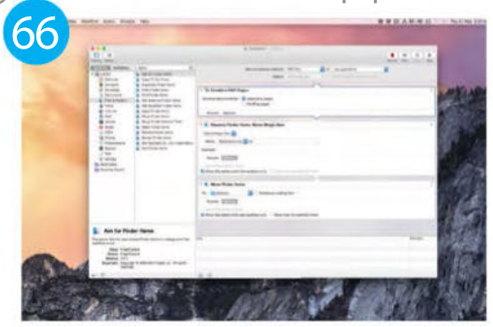
Use simple scripts to make complex tasks a breeze

"Find new features in your favourite apps"



System Preferences

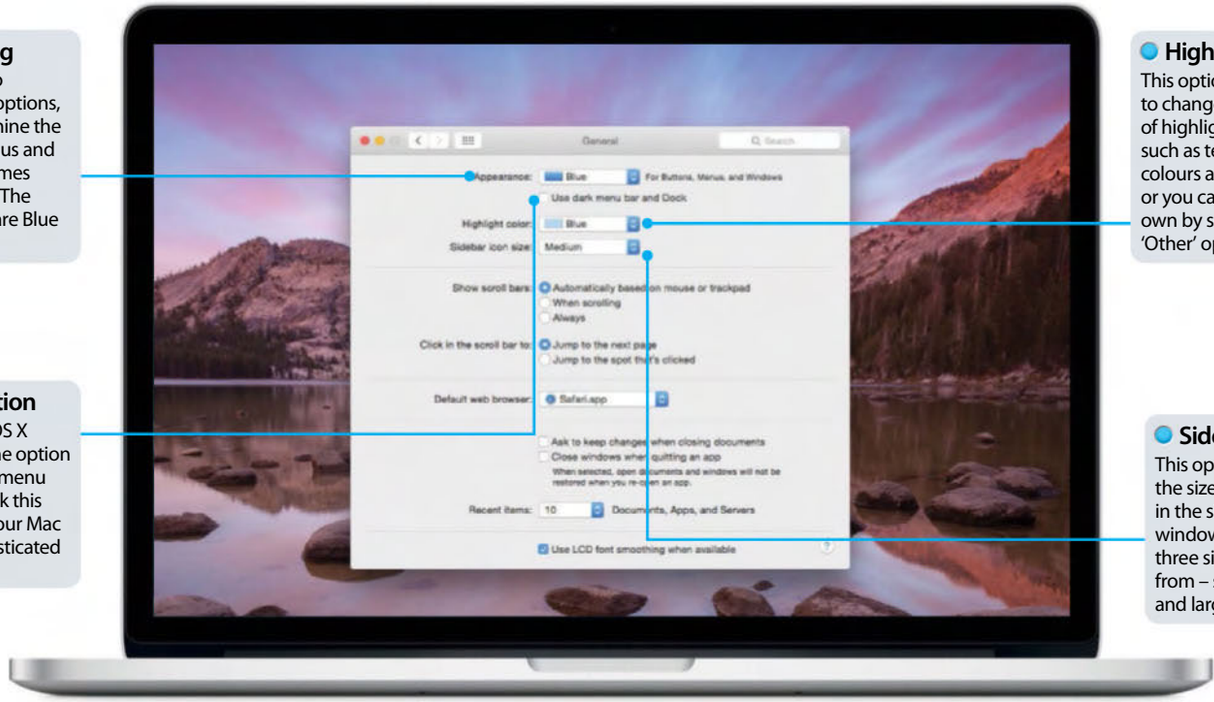
Start exploring the nerve centre of your Mac and adjust its inner workings to suit your needs

System Preferences is the heart of your Mac: the place to go when you need to change various aspects to suit your needs. These changes could be relatively trivial, down to the general appearance of your machine, through to more advanced settings such as when it powers down through lack of activity or how other users can interact with it.

If you want to put your own stamp on your Mac, System Preferences is where all of the subtle tweaks are made. Everything is laid out in clearly labelled panes that you can click on to explore the various options within, and any changes that you make are instantly saved and applied to your Mac going forward. Over the following pages we will be taking a look at some of the more important System Preferences panes and demonstrating what changes you can make to your Mac through them. But as there are so many more panes that we haven't the space to cover, it is worth taking time out to visit them all to see exactly what they can do for you and the performance of your Mac.

Exploring
There are two Appearance options, which determine the buttons, menus and windows themes on your Mac. The two options are Blue and Graphite

Dark option
Exclusive to OS X Yosemite is the option to use a dark menu and Dock. Tick this box to give your Mac a more sophisticated appearance



Highlight colour
This option enables you to change the colour of highlighted content, such as text. A list of colours are provided, or you can define your own by selecting the 'Other' option

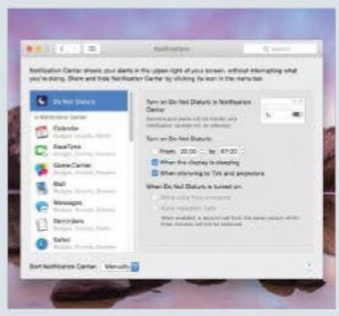
Sidebar icons
This option relates to the size of the icons in the sidebar of open windows. There are three sizes to choose from – small, medium and large

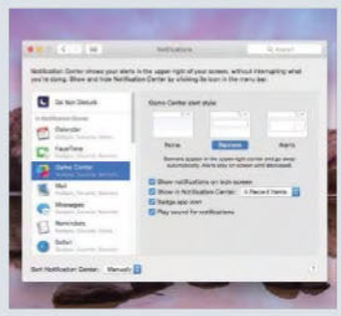
"Any changes that you make are instantly saved and applied to your Mac going forward"

Managing your notifications

Determine how and when apps send you alerts

The Notifications pane lists all of the apps that are able to send you notifications (you can visit your Notification Centre at any time by clicking on the list icon in the top-right corner of the screen). Select an app in the Notifications pane to determine the method of notification. By clicking on the Do Not Disturb option at the top of the list, you can set a time period when your Mac won't disturb you with any notifications – which can prove handy when you're enjoying some downtime or perhaps watching movies on your Mac.



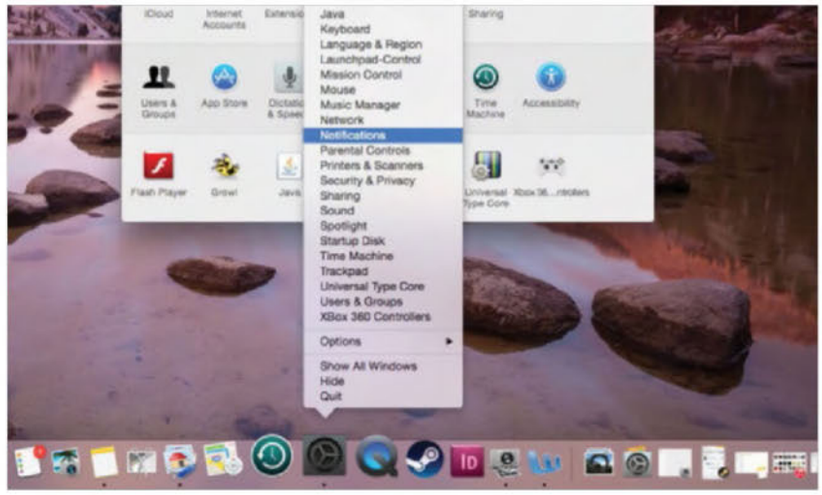


Access your System Preferences options quickly

If you know the pane you need, then this trick will save you time

It takes a few seconds to launch System Preferences, plus a couple more to locate the pane you need, but you can save time simply by right-clicking on the System Preferences icon in your Dock. Doing so will make a pop-up menu appear, displaying all of your preferences as a list – so simply select the one you want and it will launch System Preferences and simultaneously open the pane that you need.

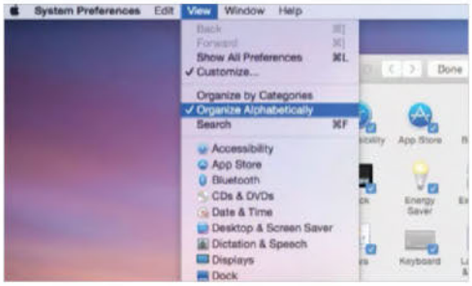
"Save time by right-clicking on the System Preferences icon in your Dock"

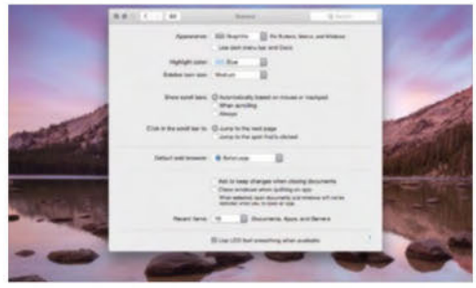


Customise your System Preferences

Learn how to display only the panes that you need

System Preferences is home to all of the inner workings of your Mac, but if you don't use all of the panes on offer, why display them? By clicking on the View menu, you can choose the Customize option, which will place tick boxes next to all of the panes, so simply deselect the ones you don't need. From the same menu, you can also choose to view your System Preferences panes alphabetically.





Customise your Mac's appearance

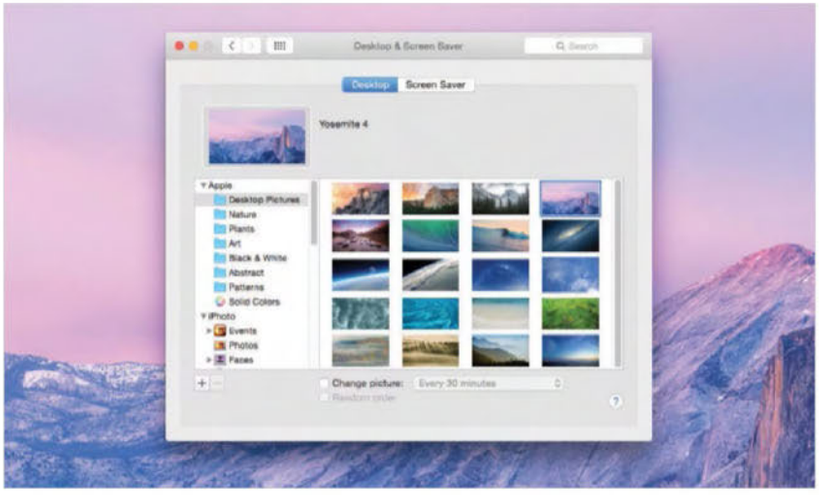
Use the General pane to jazz up your Mac

The Appearance pane determines the button, menu and window theme for Mac OS X. There are two theme options: Blue and Graphite. Your choice will affect the buttons in dialog boxes and certain menu items. For example, if you choose Graphite then the familiar 'traffic light' buttons in the top-left corner of windows are replaced by all-grey alternatives (for the more serious Mac user!).

Darken your menu bar and Dock

Try the new option exclusive to Yosemite

One new addition to the General pane that was introduced with Mac OS X Yosemite is the option to 'Use dark menu bar and Dock'. Tick this box and you will notice that the menu bar that runs across the top of your screen and your Dock will be darkened, as will any menus that you select from either place. It's a simple way to make your Mac look that little bit more sophisticated.



"You can use your own images imported from the Photos app"

Change your desktop

Select alternate desktop and screensavers

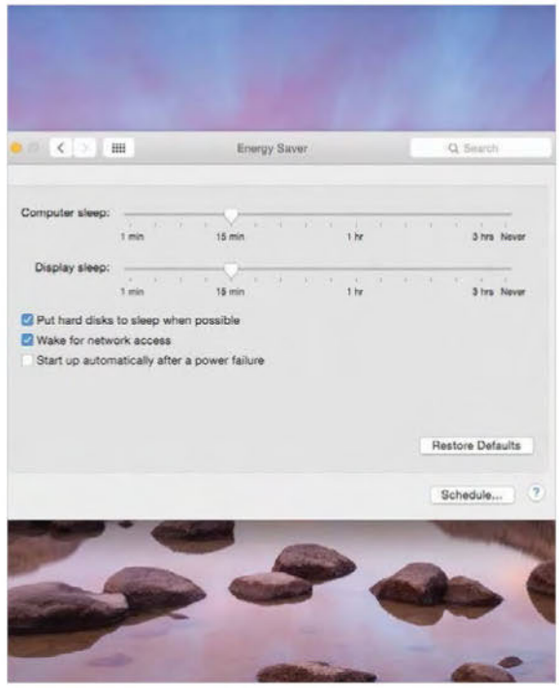
Clicking on the Desktop & Screen Saver pane will allow you to change the wallpaper on your desktop, and the screensaver that kicks in when your Mac is idle (for a period of time that you can determine here). When choosing a desktop, you will see a selection of folders in the left-hand column, each of which contains a selection of images. Alternatively, you can use your own images imported from iPhoto or the new Photos app. You can also tick the option to change the picture over a certain time period.

Energy Saver usage

How to make your Mac more energy efficient

The Energy Saver pane is where you go to adjust the power settings of your Mac, most notably the amount of time it is idle before automatically going to sleep in order to save power. Further options enable you to put hard disks to sleep whenever possible, wake the Mac up for network access, and restart your machine automatically in the event of a power failure. By clicking on the Schedule button, you can also input times when your Mac will be put to sleep and wake up each day.

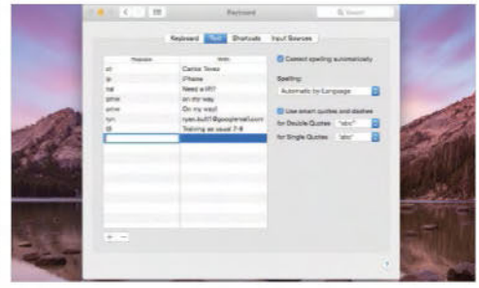
"Determine precisely when your Mac goes to sleep"

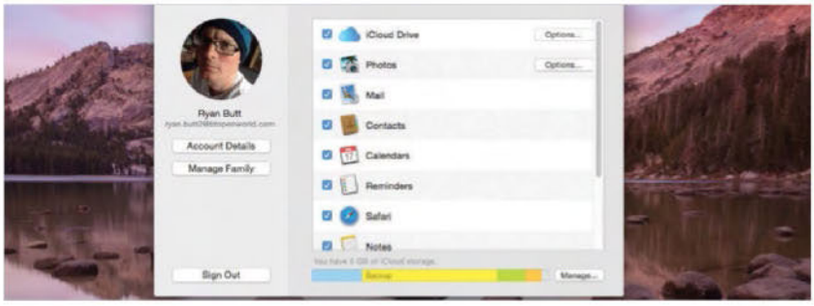


Create text shortcuts

Speed up your productivity with the Keyboard pane

The Keyboard pane has many uses, but one of our favourites can be found under the Text tab. Here you can create a list of text shortcuts consisting of a letter or two – when these letters are typed, a longer array of text is then automatically entered; for example 'On my way' when you type 'omw'. If you regularly type on your Mac, this feature can prove a great time-saver. To get started, click on the '+' button and then type an entry in the 'Replace' and 'With' fields.





Using iCloud

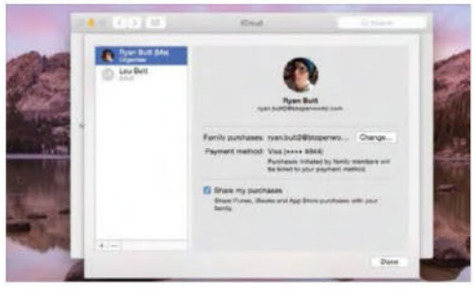
Keep all of your devices in sync with Apple's cloud service

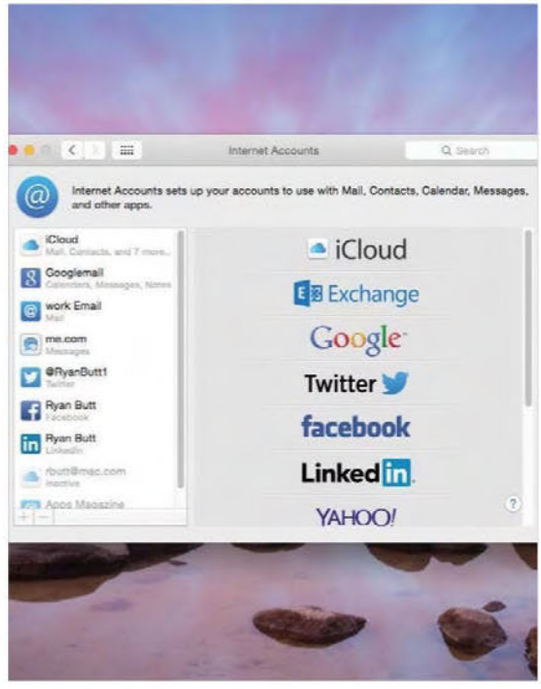
Apple's iCloud service is a relatively new addition to Mac OS X, but it is designed to help keep all of your important data backed up and also ensure that applications running over Mac OS X and iOS (your iPhone and/or iPad) are kept in sync. So if, for example, you log into your iCloud account on your Mac and tick the Notes box (and do the same on your iOS device), then any notes you create on your Mac will be synced to your mobile device.

Family management

Control all of your family's iTunes activity through one machine

While in the iCloud pane of System Preferences, if you click on the Manage Family button, you will be able to add family members to your account. The purpose of this is that you can then purchase all apps and iTunes store content from a single account. This is especially important if you have children who perhaps don't know all of the implications of in-app purchases! You can also use this feature to track the location of family members through their iOS devices.





Your internet accounts

Log in and manage all of your accounts via one handy pane

The Internet Accounts pane is the place to go to log into various mail, contacts, calendar and messages apps. For example, since social networks like Twitter and Facebook have been incorporated into Mac OS X (to make it quick and easy to share content from other apps), this is where you log into the accounts to activate them on your Mac. Click on an account to add from the list, or if the one you wish to add isn't displayed, click on the Add Other Account option at the bottom.

"Children don't know the implications of in-app purchases!"

"You can purchase up to 1TB of iCloud storage space if you find that your initial allowance is getting full"

Your iCloud services
Once you have logged into your iCloud account, tick the boxes of the apps that you would like to utilise the service. Some have extra 'Options' to explore…

Manage your storage
Clicking this button lets you manage the documents and data of the apps using the iCloud service and, if your iCloud storage space is nearly full, purchase more

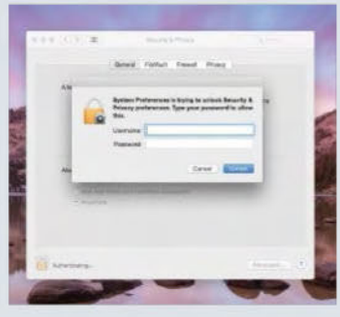
Account details
Click on this button and enter your iCloud password to view various general, contact, security and payment options relating to your account

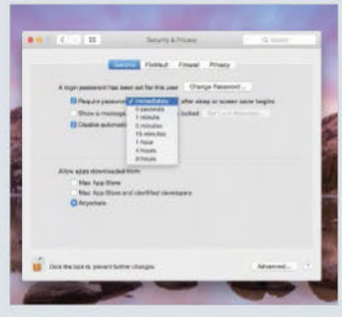
Manage family
Click here to add family members to your account in order to ensure all outgoing app and iTunes payments must be authorised by you and go out of one central account

Security settings

Learn how to protect your Mac

If the Mac you are using is situated in an open and/or public environment, such as an office, then it is a good idea to explore the Security & Privacy pane in System Preferences to help secure it. In order to make changes to this pane, you will first need to click the padlock icon in the bottom-left corner and then probably enter an admin name and password – to stop anyone else tampering with the settings. If not, however, in this pane you will be able to set a login password for the Mac in order to prevent others from accessing your files.





Finder

Understanding how the Finder works is crucial to using your Mac effectively and will save you hours of time and frustration

The Finder in OS X allows you to navigate and organise all the files and folders on your Mac, including other applications. You can configure it to browse apps, disks, files and folders in several different ways, delete files you don't want, copy or move those you want to put somewhere else, and search for anything you need to find.

The first thing to note about OS X's Finder is that there are some folders created by the OS automatically, which you should leave as they are. These include your Home folder (with your username), and the Documents, Pictures, Music and Video folders within it. Also, System and Library folders should be left as they are. To minimise problems later, you should store files in the appropriate folder within your Home folder, though you can of course create subfolders within these.

To make subfolders easy to access, you can drag them onto the sidebar of any Finder window and they will then be accessible from there in every Finder window.

Quick Look
Select a file, then tap the space bar to preview its contents. To see it full-screen, click the arrows at the top of the Quick Look window

See the path
Click on the Path button to see the path of a selected file. Start reading from the bottom up to find the file's location

Search for files
Type a query into the search bar to search for files or folders. You can then filter the search results or point it to a specific folder

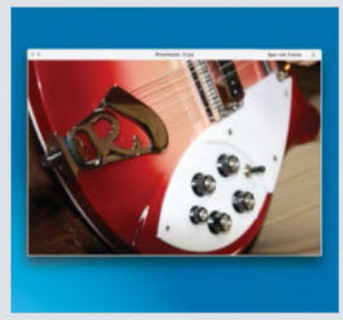
Change icon size
Drag the slider to the right to increase the size of the icons in icon view, or to the left to make them smaller

"There are some folders created by the OS automatically, which you should leave as they are"

Create a slideshow

Quick Look has a hidden feature

You can take a Quick Look at multiple files simultaneously by Shift-clicking on them and then pressing the space bar to invoke Quick Look. Now, press the arrows icon at the top left of the Quick Look window to expand the preview and see it in full-screen. You'll see a number of different playback controls on a heads-up display near the bottom of the image. Press the Play button to start the slideshow. Alternatively, you can use the cursor keys on your keyboard to move to the next image manually, or scroll back and forth between pictures.

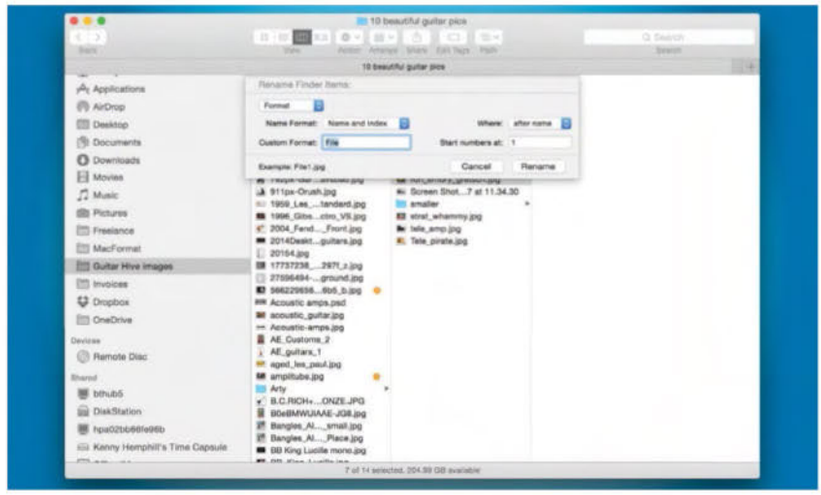


Batch-rename files

An easy way to rename lots of files

Open a new Finder window and navigate to the relevant files that you want to rename in bulk. Shift-click on the files you want to rename in order to select them. When they have been selected, Ctrl-click the files and choose 'Rename…' from the contextual menu which drops down next to the cursor. Choose options from the menu and then type text into the box. There are a number of name formats to choose from, the most common of which is a custom word, such as 'File', followed by a number.

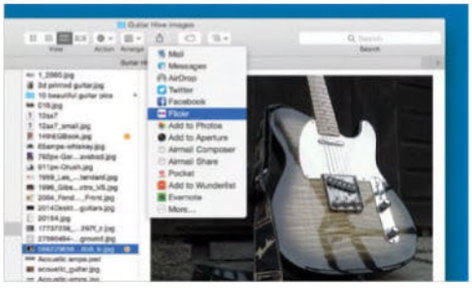
"Shift-click the files you want to rename in order to select them"

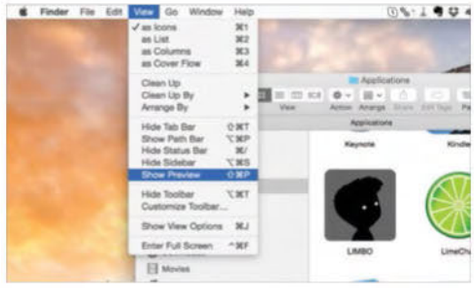


Share a file

Share files from a Finder window

Navigate to or search for the file that you want to share with a contact. Click on it, and then click on the Share button in the Finder's toolbar. In the menu that drops down, you will see lots of options for apps that you can use to share the file, depending on the type of file you have selected and the apps you have installed on your computer. To share with the Messages app, click Messages to send the file using iMessage. Additional sharing services, including Dropbox and Evernote can be added to this menu in System Preferences.





Preview files

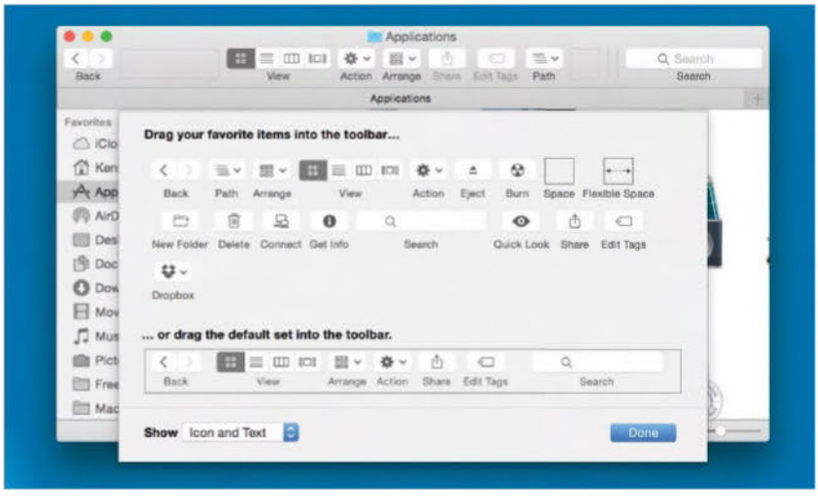
You can now preview files in any Finder view

The Finder has long been able to preview the contents of a file when you're in column view. But now you can do it in list, icon and Cover Flow views as well. To display the preview pane in views other than column view, open a new Finder window, then go to the View menu and click Show Preview. This will display previews in icon, list and Cover Flow views, making it incredibly easy and convenient to view all manner of files without having to load up the relevant application.

Set default folder

Change where new Finder windows open

To specify which folder a new Finder window points to, go to the Finder menu and click on Preferences. Click the General tab and then choose an option from the 'New Finder windows show' menu. Now, every time you open a new Finder window, it will point directly to that folder and you can navigate from there. You can pick any folder you like, and it's a useful time-saver if you regularly go to a specific folder to retrieve files, rather than simply the desktop or your user folder.



"Drag the items you want to access quickly onto the window's toolbar"

Custom settings

Customise the toolbar

With a Finder window open, click on the View menu and select 'Customize Toolbar…'. Drag the items you want to acess quickly onto the window's toolbar. If, for example, you regularly use Dropbox, you can put an equivalent of its menu bar item directly into the Finder's toolbar. If you burn DVDs, you can put that action there, too, so that it's immediately accessible at all times. If you change your mind, or decide you want the toolbar back to the way it was, drag the default set to revert to it.

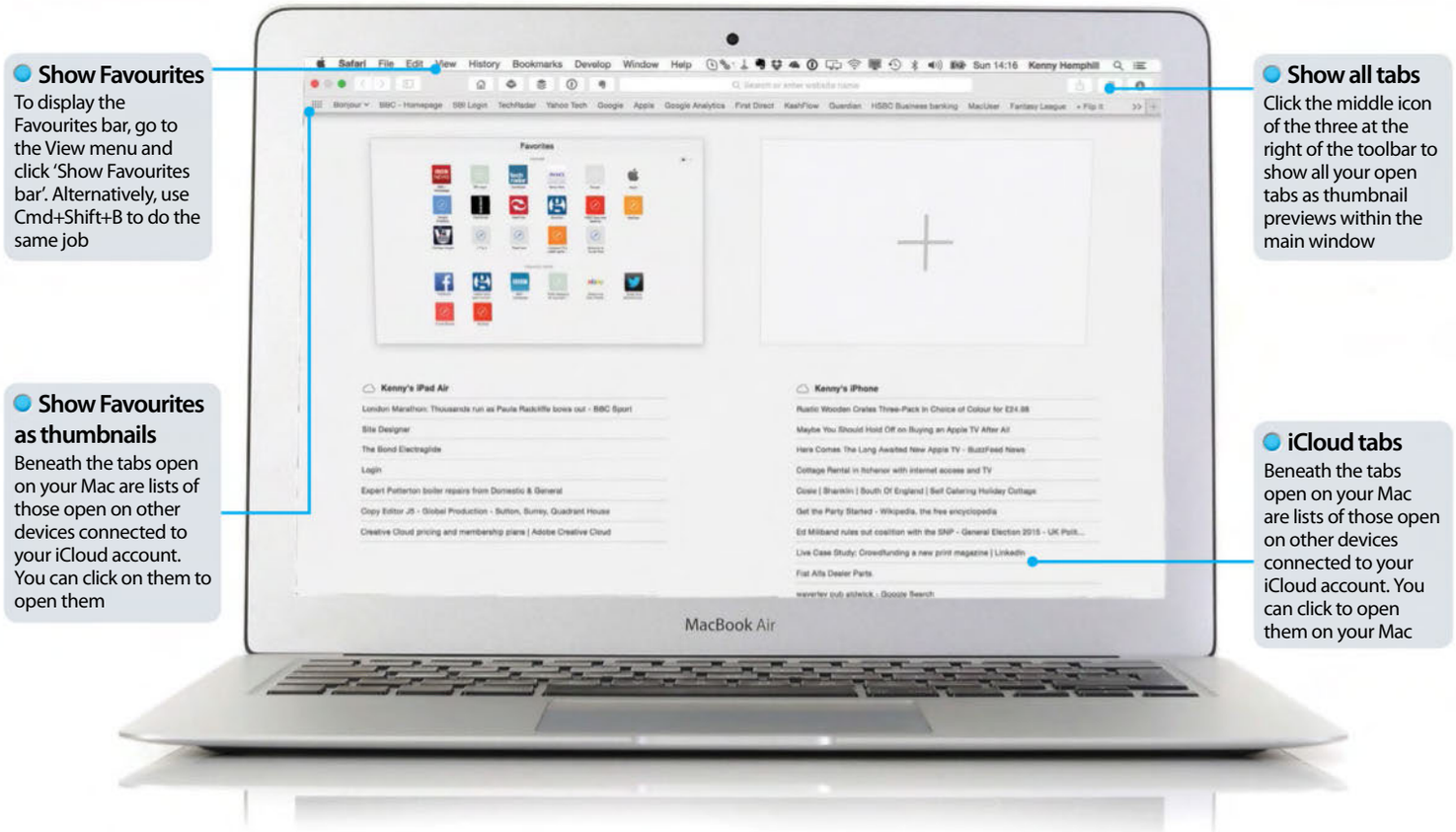
Safari

OS X's default web browser, Safari has some very useful features. Here's how to get the most from it

The Safari web browser has had some significant updates in recent versions of OS X. Now, for example, if you have an iPhone or iPad and are logged into your iCloud account, your History on your Mac will reflect sites you've browsed on your iPad, and vice versa. You can also view tabs which are open on your Mac on an iPhone or iPad.

In Yosemite, the address bar is much smarter and works similarly to Spotlight. Type in a movie title and it will display snippets from Wikipedia under the address bar. Hotels and restaurants show the same details as Spotlight. Click once and you're given a more detailed preview; click again and you're taken to the relevant website.

In addition, Safari's AutoFill feature now includes a pretty robust password manager. This will create new passwords for you, encrypt them and store them safely, and then allow you to AutoFill them whenever you need to log into a website. It can do the same with credit card information, making it a handy time-saving feature.

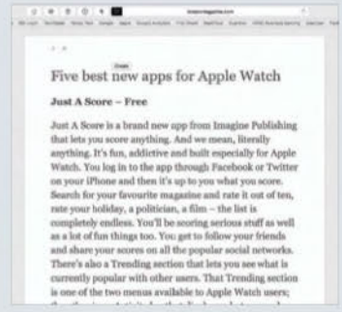


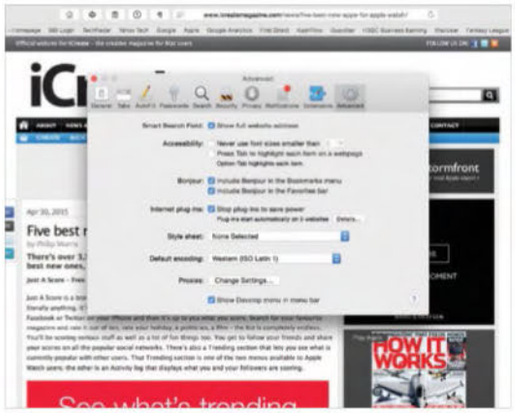
"You can see a list of tabs that are open on other devices"

Reading

Make sites easier to read

Contemporary websites are often cluttered with images, animations and annoying adverts, making the actual text somewhat difficult to read. To make it easier, hover over the four horizontal-lines icon at the left of the smart search bar. This displays the message 'Show Reader View.' If you click it, Safari will strip out any and all distracting elements from the webpage, making the text far easier for you to read. Reader View also allows you to choose between two different text sizes by clicking the 'A' at the top left of the Reader window.



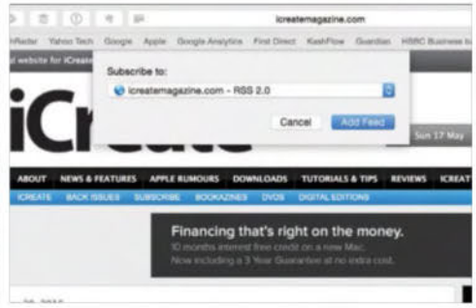


Show full URL

See the whole website URL in the Smart Search bar

By default, Safari's address bar, or Smart Search bar to give it its full title, only shows the first part of a URL (web address). This is fine most of the time, but not great if you like to use the URL as a reference in order to identify exactly where you are on a site.

To change this setting, go to Preferences in Safari and then click on Advanced. Now click the check box next to 'Show full website address'. The address bar will now display the full URL of each webpage.

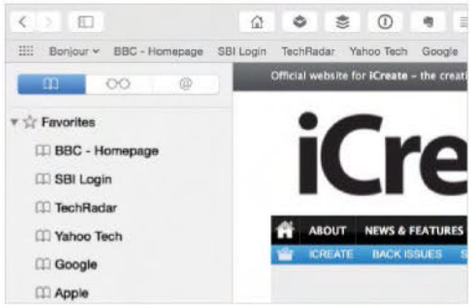


View Favourites

Browse your bookmarks and quickly access favourite sites

Click the Show Sidebar icon, which is situated at the left of Safari's toolbar. It's the button to the right of the navigation arrows, and looks like a window with two panes and has three lines in the left pane. When the sidebar opens after you've selected it, click on the book icon in order to see your Favourite sites, or the spectacles to see your Reading List.

The Favourites option saves the URL of the page you're visiting and takes you back to the current version of that webpage, while Reading List saves the content of the page for you to browse offline.



"Safari's address bar only shows the first part of a URL"

Add to Reading List

Save articles to read later when you're short on time

To add a webpage to your Reading List, you must first navigate to it either by clicking a link, by Googling it, or by typing its URL (web address) into the search bar. When the page loads, hover your cursor over the address bar – or Smart Search bar, as Apple calls it.

When you see the '+' symbol appear at the left of the Smart Search bar, click on it. The content of the page will then be added to your Reading List so that you can read it later, even if you're offline.

Subscribe to a feed

Use Safari as an RSS reader and keep track of your feeds

Click on the Show Sidebar icon at the left of Safari's toolbar, and then click on the '@' icon. Scroll to the bottom of the sidebar and then click on the Subscriptions button. You can then select the Add Feeds option.

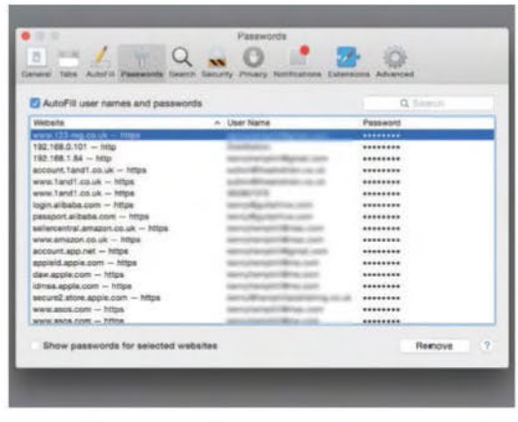
If the site that you're browsing has an RSS feed, Safari will detect its address and it will be added directly to your Feeds. You can then view the latest articles from it, along with any other feeds you're subscribed to, in the '@' section of the sidebar.

"Safari can auto-generate passwords for websites and save them"

View a password

Check a site's password

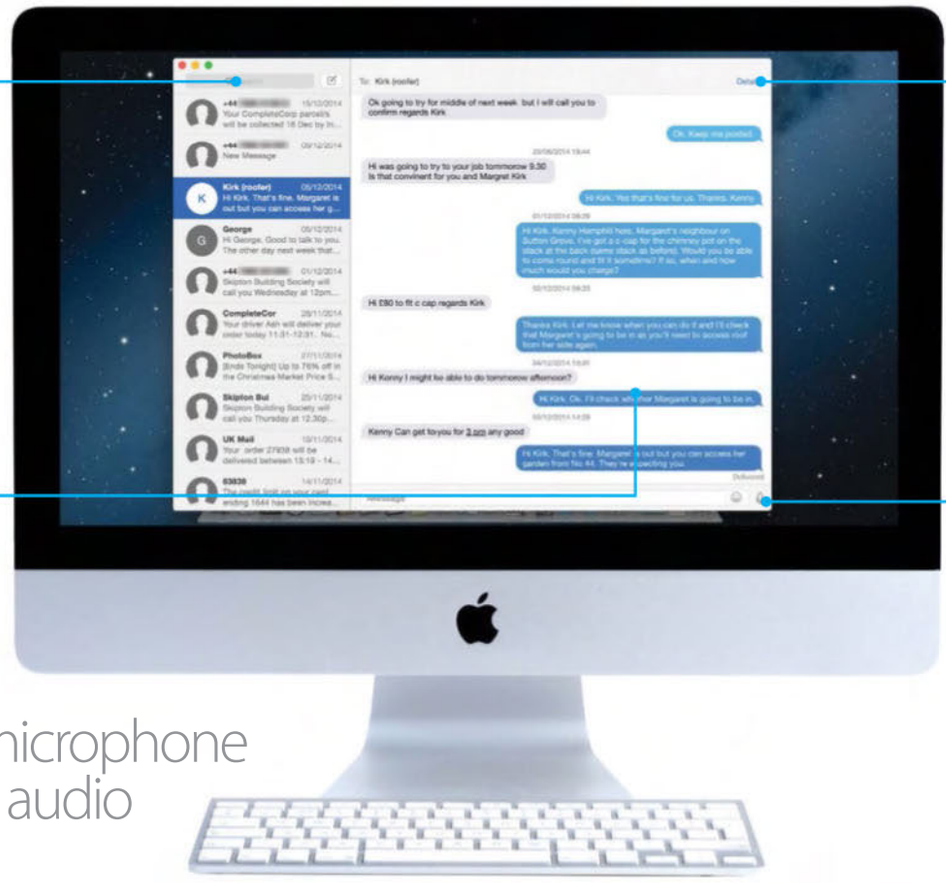
Safari can auto-generate passwords for websites and save them, so that it can AutoFill them the next time you visit that site. It can also save and AutoFill passwords you choose yourself. To see a saved password, go to Preferences, then Advanced and search for the site whose password you want by typing the site's name into the search bar. Click on the site and click the box marked 'Show password for selected sites.' For security purposes, you'll have to type in your administrator password. The password for the site will now be displayed.



Messages

Whether you use it to chat to other Mac users, or to send occasional text messages, Messages is a very useful tool

The Messages app is used to send iMessages to other Apple device owners – or SMS messages, if you have an iPhone close by, to those who don't have Mac, iPhone or iCloud. You can send pictures and audio messages as well as text, and conversations can be archived and retrieved later One of the best features of Messages in OS X Yosemite is that, if you have an iPhone running iOS 8 and connected to the same Wi-Fi network as your Mac, you can send SMS messages directly from Messages on your Mac. It works in reverse too: if someone sends a text to your iPhone, it will appear in Messages. The Messages app syncs threads with your iPhone too, so you can follow conversations on any device. And you can give conversations titles so they're easier to find later. Messages allows you to add people to group conversations after they've started and allows you to leave a group conversation. Alternatively, you can just switch off alerts for that conversation so you're not disturbed every time someone chimes in.



Search messages
The search window allows you to search for conversations. You can search using words from contacts' names, conversation titles, or text from the body of conversations

Blue or green
Message threads in Messages are either blue or green. Blue indicates that the other person is using a Mac or iOS device; green that the messages are SMS

Details, details
The Details box is where you mute notifications, leave groups, add people to conversations, and initiate a screen-sharing session with a contact

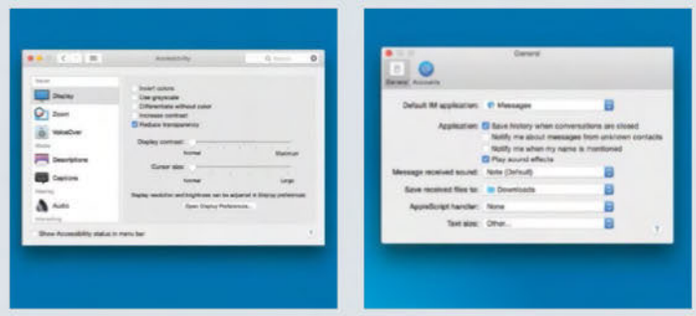
Audio messages
Click the microphone to send an audio message. When you click, it starts recording from your Mac's microphone. When you stop, it saves the snippet and allows you to send it

"Click the microphone to send an audio message"

Style it up

Change the Messages font

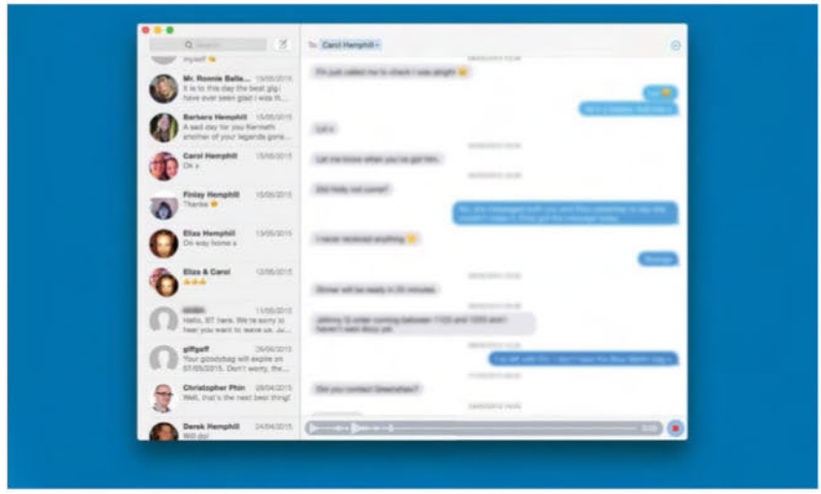
The option to change the font for messages has disappeared in Yosemite, but the good news is that you can bring it back. Go to System Preferences>Accessibility> Display and then click on Reduce Transparency. Relaunch the Messages app, go to Preferences>General, click Text Size and then Other. The standard OS X font chooser will then open. You can now select any font you want for messages, at whatever size suits you. Note that you need to keep the Reduce Transparency option on for it to work.



Audio messages
Send an audio message

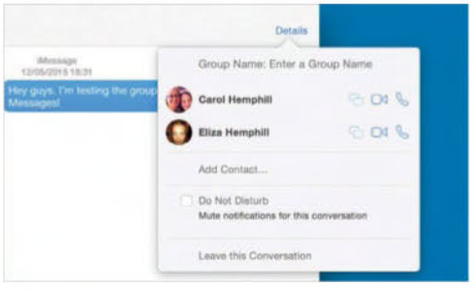
While the Messages app is primarily designed for text messaging and sending images and other files, you can also send snippets of recorded audio. Click the New Message button and type the name of the recipient. When their name appears in the list of contacts, click on it to place it in the address bar. Now click the microphone next to the text box at the bottom of the window. Speak your message, press the red stop button when you're finished, and then press Send to send the audio snippet.

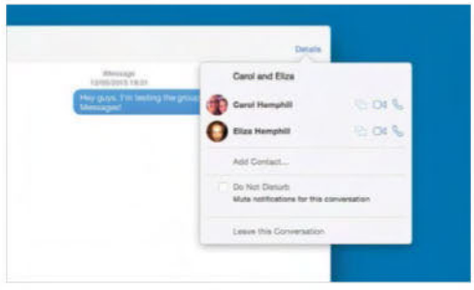
"You can send snippets of recorded audio in Messages"



Mute notifications
Activate Do Not Disturb

Muting notifications for specific conversations can prove useful, particularly in the case of busy multi-participant chats, which can overwhelm your notifications panel. In order to switch them off, navigate to the conversation whose notifications you want to mute. Click the Details box at the top right of the window. Then click the box next to Do Not Disturb. Notifications will now be switched off for this conversation but remain on for others. You can switch them back on at any time, by unchecking the box next to Do Not Disturb.



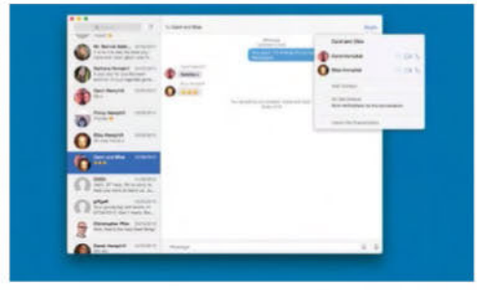


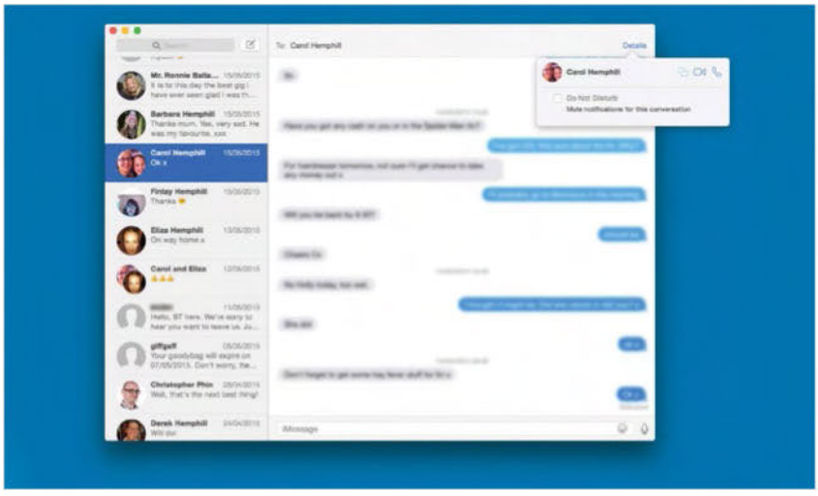
Name a conversation
Make it easier to find

Naming conversations, particularly group conversations, can make them much easier to find when you need to refer to them later. In order to name a group conversation, start the conversation by sending a message to the recipients. Then click the Details box, click on Group Name and type a new name for it. You will now see that the new group name is displayed at the top of the window. Now, when the conversation ends, you'll be able to find it using the name to search for it. Keep it clean, though, the name will appear with every message!

Leave a group
Let the conversation carry on without you

Sometimes, muting notifications for a group conversation may not be enough and you may decide that you need to leave it altogether. To leave a group conversation, click the Details button and go down to where it says Leave this Conversation. Click it and you'll be removed from the conversation. The other participants will still be able to carry on chatting using the same window, but you will no longer see the conversation or be able to respond.





"There are occasions when allowing others to see your screen is very useful"

Share your screen
Let others see your Mac's screen

There are occasions when allowing other people to see your screen, or being able to see the screen of the person you're chatting to, is very useful. If you're training someone, for example, or providing technical support, seeing the same screen helps a great deal. Click on Details and then click the leftmost icon next to your contact's name. Choose whose screen to share: yours or theirs. They'll get a notification request. If they accept, you will both see the screen until you end either the conversation or the screen-sharing session.

FaceTime

The Mac's audio and video chat application has evolved and is now a great way to make phone calls from your Mac

FaceTime uses the built-in camera on a MacBook, MacBook Air, MacBook Pro or iMac to enable you to make video calls at up to 720p definition to anyone who has a Mac, iPhone or iPad.

However, if you have a Mac mini or a Mac Pro, you can still use FaceTime by connecting a third-party webcam.

The app can also be used to make audio-only calls, when you don't want to share video from your FaceTime camera.

In OS X Yosemite, FaceTime can now be used, when you have an iPhone running iOS 8 on the same Wi-Fi network, to make telephone calls to any phone number.

You can also receive calls on your Mac. Once you have it set up, whenever someone calls your iPhone's phone number, your Mac will start to ring and you'll see a notification telling you that you have an incoming call. Press a button to answer and you'll hear the caller on your Mac's speakers and you'll be able to use its microphone to talk to them.

Audio list
The Audio tab lists everyone you've spoken to recently, whether it was via FaceTime or a phone call on your iPhone

Search contacts
The search box allows you to search for contacts using their name, an email address or their phone number

Contacts list
On the left-hand side of the FaceTime window when you launch the app is a list of contacts you've recently had FaceTime video calls with

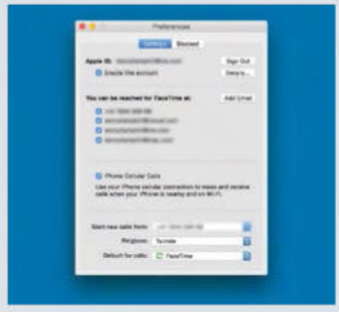
More information
Click the 'i' next to a contact's name to see information from the Contacts app, including their email addresses and phone number

"The Audio tab lists everyone you've spoken to recently, including phone calls made from your iPhone"

iPhone cellular calls

How to set them up

To use FaceTime to make phone calls, you need to set it up on both your iPhone and your Mac. In the Settings app in iOS 8, go to FaceTime and enable the iPhone Cellular Calls option. Then back on your Mac, launch FaceTime, go to Preferences, click the Settings tab, and check the box next to iPhone Cellular Calls. Make sure you also tick the box next to your phone number (rather than just your Apple ID or email address) so you can receive calls made to your iPhone. After that, you should be able to make phone calls from FaceTime on your Mac.

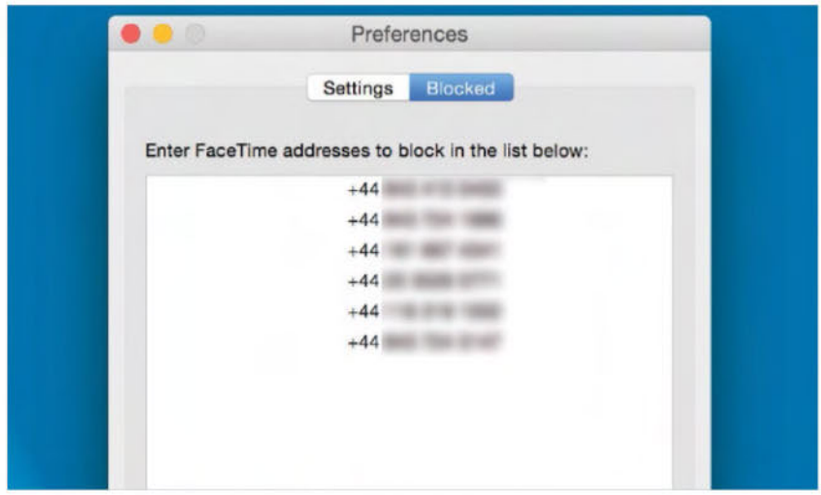


Block unwanted calls

Prevent unwelcome phone calls

There are a number of ways in which you can block unwanted phone calls on your iPhone. If you have already blocked some numbers, go to Preferences in FaceTime on your Mac and click the Blocked tab. You will see a list of blocked numbers. To add a contact to the blocked list, click the '+' symbol at the bottom of the window and choose a contact from the list. If the number that you want to block isn't associated with a particular contact, you'll have to create one for it.

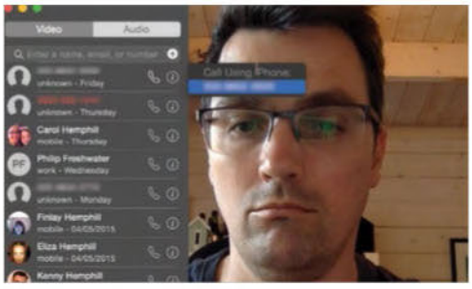
"Go to Preferences in FaceTime on your Mac and click the Blocked tab"

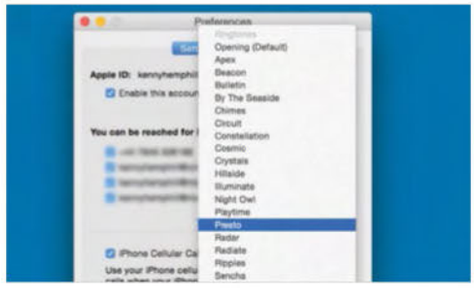


Make a phone call

Use your Mac as a phone

Set up your Mac and iPhone to allow you to make and receive calls, as described in the 'iPhone cellular calls' boxout on the previous page. Then, in FaceTime, click the Audio tab and use the search box to search for a specific contact or phone number, or choose one from the list of recent contacts. When you have found it, click the phone icon next to the contact's name. Assuming that your iPhone is connected to the same Wi-Fi network as your computer, it will now dial the number and relay the call directly to your Mac.





Change the ringtone

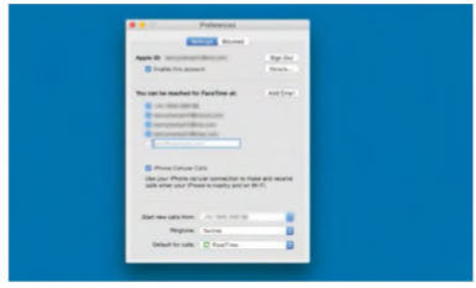
There are plenty to choose from

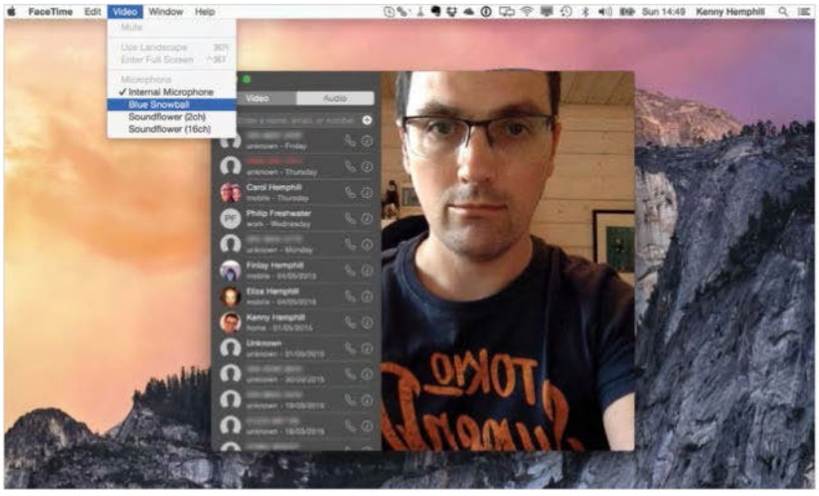
By default, when you set up FaceTime to receive phone calls, the ringtone is the standard 'Opening' tone. While some people like its attention-grabbing sound, others may find the default ringtone harsh and sometimes startling, especially if you have the volume turned up on your Mac. To change it, go to FaceTime>Preferences and then click on Settings. Click on the menu next to Ringtone and choose a new ringtone from the list of available options. The next time you receive a call, it should come as less of a shock.

Add an email address

More than one Apple ID email?

If you have more than one email address associated with your Apple ID – for example, if you've been using **mac.com** and also have **me.com** and **icloud.com** variants as well – you can be reached on any of them through a single FaceTime profile. Go to FaceTime and then Preferences. Click the Settings tab and click 'Add email address'. You'll be sent an email asking you to verify the account. Follow the instructions in the email to complete the verification process and add the address to your FaceTime settings.





"If you have another microphone connected to your Mac, you can use it"

Use a different mic

You can use an external microphone

By default, FaceTime uses your Mac's built-in microphone for FaceTime calls. But if you have another microphone connected to your Mac, say a USB mic, you can use that instead.

Go to FaceTime and click on the Video menu. At the bottom, under the heading Microphone, you'll see a list of the microphones available for use. Click on the one you want. If it's not there, go to System Settings, click on the Sound pane, then the Input tab and select it. Try again in FaceTime.

Contacts

Contacts is the database which holds all the names, addresses and phone numbers you use in OS X

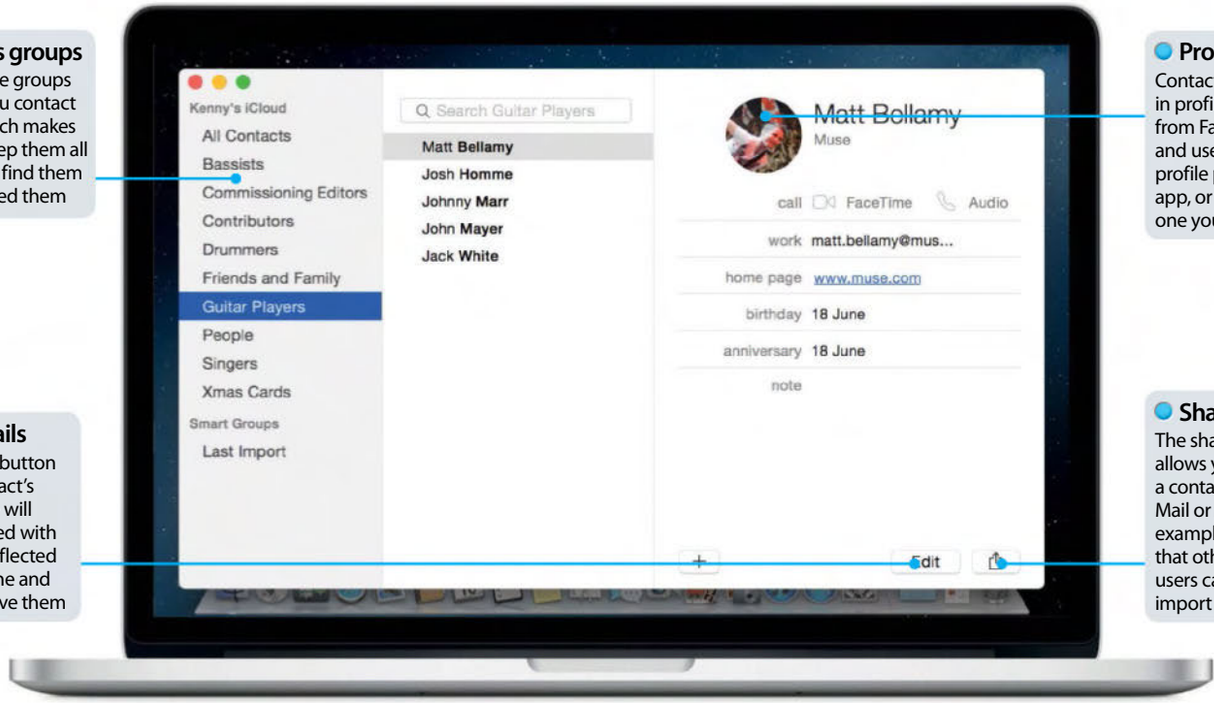
Contacts isn't just an address book, it's the very hub of everything you do on the Mac that has anything to do with keeping in touch with others. Whether it's sending an email in Mail, a text message in Messages or making a call with FaceTime, Contacts provides the email addresses and phone numbers you need.

Contacts also integrates with Pages, to make it easy to add addresses to letters, and is available to third-party apps so they can pull data from it too. Make appointments in Calendar? It will pull the details of the attendees from Contacts. In short, keeping Contacts up to date with details of those you communicate with regularly is essential.

Fortunately, the app has evolved to make this very easy. For example, it can now pull in data from Facebook and LinkedIn, with your permission, so that you have details for all your Facebook friends and LinkedIn contacts, including their profile photos. Contacts can be synced with iCloud, so that you always have the latest details on all your devices.

Contacts groups
You can create groups for people you contact regularly, which makes it easier to keep them all together and find them when you need them

Edit details
Click the Edit button to edit a contact's details. These will then be synced with iCloud and reflected on your iPhone and iPad if you have them



Profile pic
Contacts can pull in profile photos from Facebook and use them as a profile photo in the app, or you can add one yourself

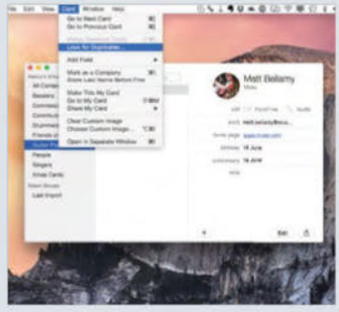
Share a contact
The share button allows you to share a contact card using Mail or Messages, for example, meaning that other Contacts users can easily import it

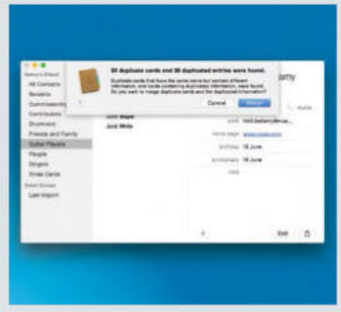
"The share button allows you to share a contact card, meaning that other Contacts users can easily import it"

Culling and merging

Prune contacts regularly

The Contacts app can search for and merge duplicate contacts automatically in order to better keep your address book organised. Go to the Card menu and select the 'Look for Duplicates'. option A word of warning, though: it's a very blunt, and not particularly smart, feature which is prone to errors. What's worse is that it doesn't allow you to check what it's found before you press Merge. A safer method is to prune and merge contacts manually, or to use a dedicated third-party app. It might be more time-consuming, but it's safer.

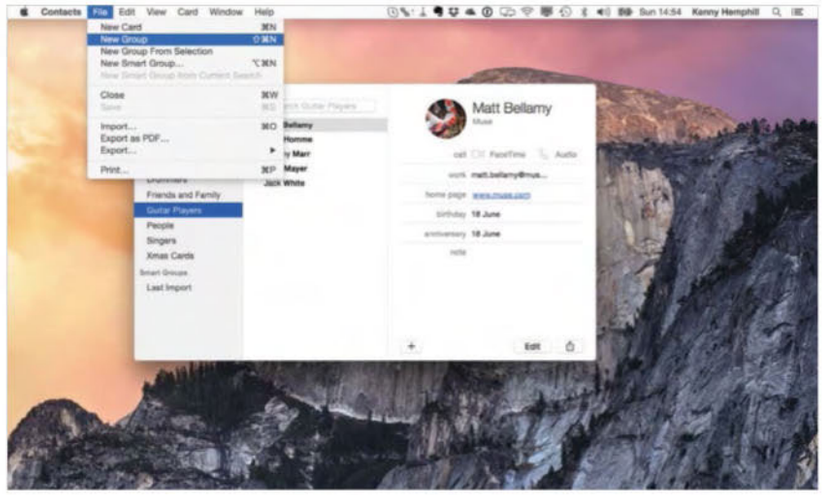




Create a new group
Get better organised

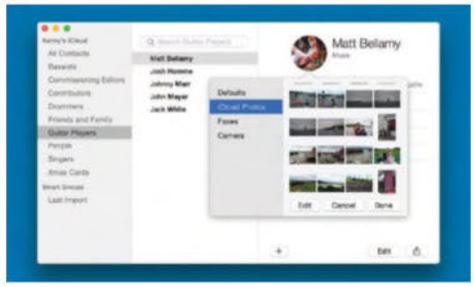
In Contacts, go the File menu and click on New Group. In the main window, type in a name for the group. You will now see the group name listed in the left-hand pane of the Contacts window. To add some contacts to it, click on All Contacts and find the first contact you want to add, either by scrolling through the list or searching for them by name. When you find the desired contact, drag their name onto the group you just created. Repeat the process for all the contacts you want to add to it.

"In Contacts, go the File menu and click on New Group"



Add social media accounts
Pull in data from Facebook and LinkedIn

Go to System Preferences and click on the Internet Accounts option to open its pane. If you haven't already added your Facebook and LinkedIn accounts here, click the '+' symbol at the bottom and select Facebook or LinkedIn. Type in your login details for that account. Now click on Facebook and check the box next to Contacts in the main window. Repeat for LinkedIn. Your Facebook friends and LinkedIn contacts will now be added to the Contacts app's database.

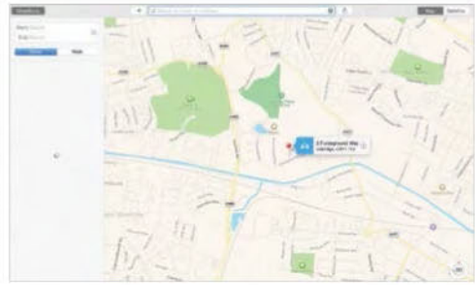


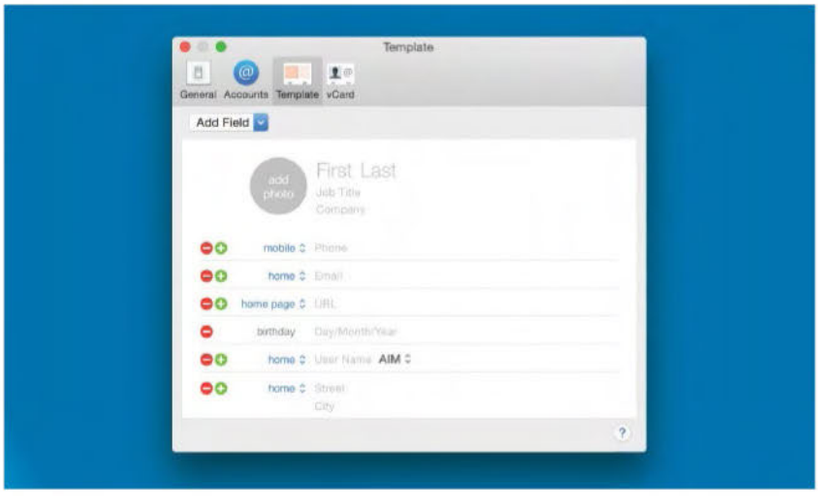
Change profile pic
You can use any photo you like to keep track of contacts

Find the contact whose profile photo you want to change. Click on the profile picture and you will be presented with several options, but there isn't one immediately available which allows you to choose a picture from outside Apple's photo apps. You can use any photo you have on your Mac, however. Just find the photo that you want to use in the Finder and drag it onto the profile photo in Contacts. You can now crop it or resize it to your liking, in order to fit the space.

Find a contact's address
Look up friends' locations with Apple Maps

The Contacts app doesn't just allow you to see the details of a contact's address – it can actually show you the address on a map and give you directions to it, too. Find the contact whose address you want to review and hover the pointer over their work or home address. When you see a map pin, click it. The Maps app will subsequently open and display the address on a map for you. To get directions, simply click the Directions button and type in the start address.





"You can change the way in which contacts' details are displayed"

Edit the template
Customise cards to your needs

You can change the way in which contacts' details are displayed, as well as add new fields and delete existing ones. In Contacts, go to Preferences and click on Template. You'll see a blank card with the current template. To add fields to a name, click on the drop-down menu and click the field. To remove the field, do the same.

If you just want to add space for an additional email address or phone number, or change their order, use the '+' and '–' buttons next to the fields.

Calendar

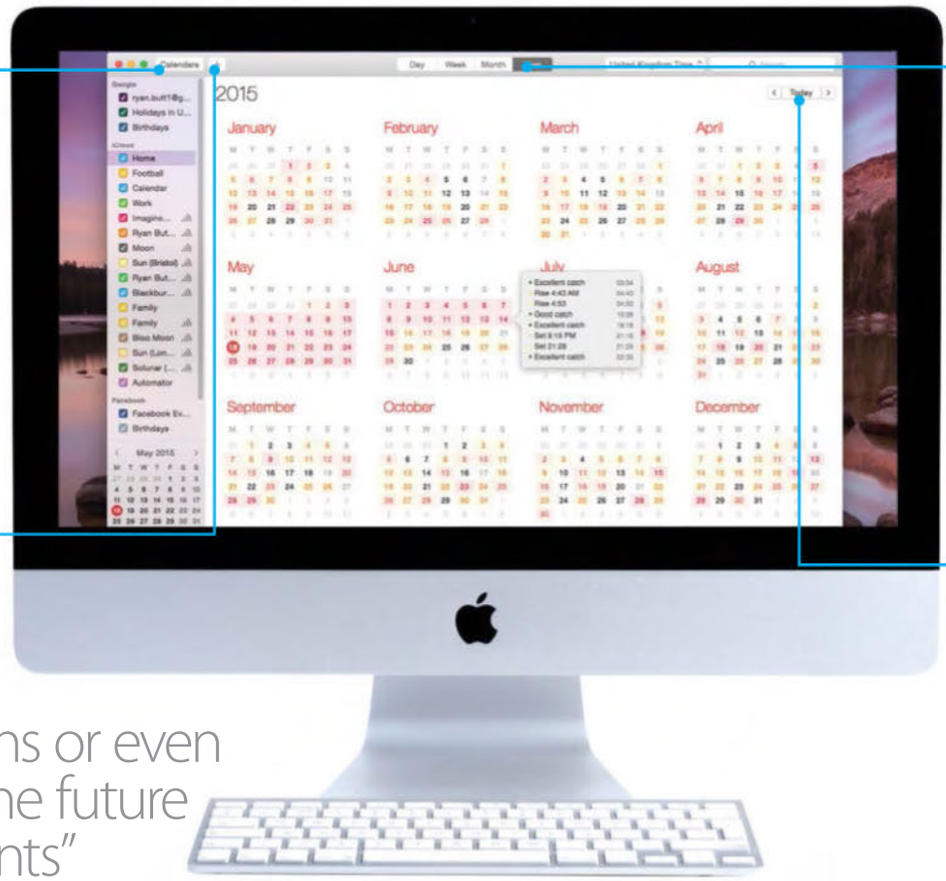
You need never miss an important date again with your Mac's personal organiser

Your Mac's build-in Calendar app is an essential tool to ensure that you never forget an important date, whether it be a critical work meeting or family birthday. You can create events quickly and easily for any date and then factor in as much information as you want, including a location, times and even people whom you would like to invite along. To ensure that you don't forget about an event you can then set alerts to nudge you in a variety of different ways.

The Calendar app also lets you display multiple calendars simultaneously. So you can display events relating to your work or personal life on one calendar and then enable and disable them from view whenever you see fit. Any calendars can also be shared with other people by clicking on them in the side column – so you can let your family or your work colleagues know exactly what you're up to and where you'll be on any given day. Read on to find out more about this app and how it can benefit you in everyday life.

Your calendars
Click this button to display the side column listing all of your enabled calendars. From this list you can select or deselect calendars to display through the interface

Add events
Click on this icon to create a Quick Event, or right-click on the date and time to create a more specific event, putting all of the essential details in place



Calendar views
Use the tabs at the top of the interface to switch views between Day, Week, Month or Year. In 'Year' view you can click on a day to see all of the events

Any time
With the Calendar app, you can schedule events well into the future. Simply click here to skip months or even years into the future to plan your events

"Skip months or even years into the future to plan events"

Tweaking the preferences

Making the app work just the way you want it to

The Calendar app is quite versatile and you can tailor it to meet your specific needs.

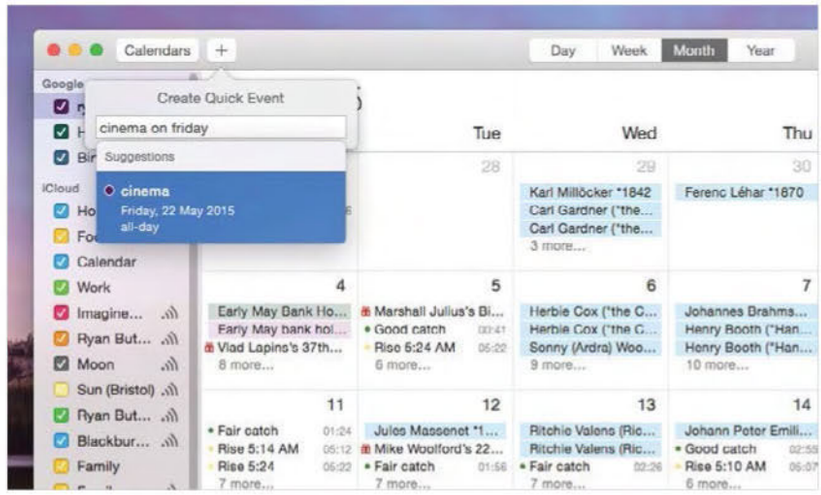
In order to do this, first click on the top-left Calendar option in the menu bar and choose Preferences. Now, under the General tab, you will be able to set the days in a week, when the week begins, whether to display public holidays or not and much more besides. You can even opt to display alternate calendars alongside the standard ones.

Be sure to explore all of the Preferences to help you understand what this app can do.

Create a Quick Event
How to mark your important dates

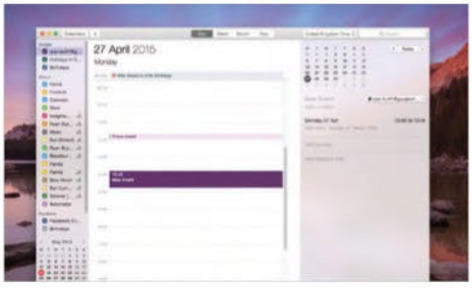
There are two simple ways to mark important events on the calendar. Clicking the '+' icon in the top-left corner will create a Quick Event – so when the text field appears, type in something and the app will second-guess the date and time to the nearest available slot and mark it on the calendar. You can then go in and tailor these details if you need to. If you include a day in the Quick Event description, then it will mark the event on the nearest possible day that corresponds.

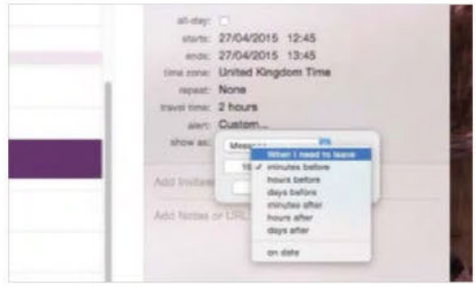
"There are two simple ways to mark important events on the calendar"



Create a standard event
Be a little more specific and include more details

The second way that you can create an event on the calendar is to navigate to the date and time of the event in question, right-click on the entry and then choose the New Event option. You will then be able to factor in a variety of additional details such as a title, start and end time and the location of the event, as well as invite other people to attend without leaving the app. You can even set yourself a reminder so that you don't forget about your event in the lead-up.





Setting alerts
Get reminded about an event

When creating events, you will also be able to set alerts to ensure that you don't forget them. The more information that you can apply to an event, the more beneficial it will be, ensuring that the alert system works effectively.

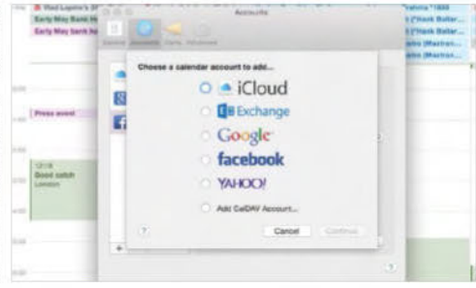
For example, if you add a location and factor in the travel time, you can then choose the Custom option in the Alert field and select the 'When I need to leave' option. This clever setting will help to ensure that you are alerted in plenty of time to get to your event.

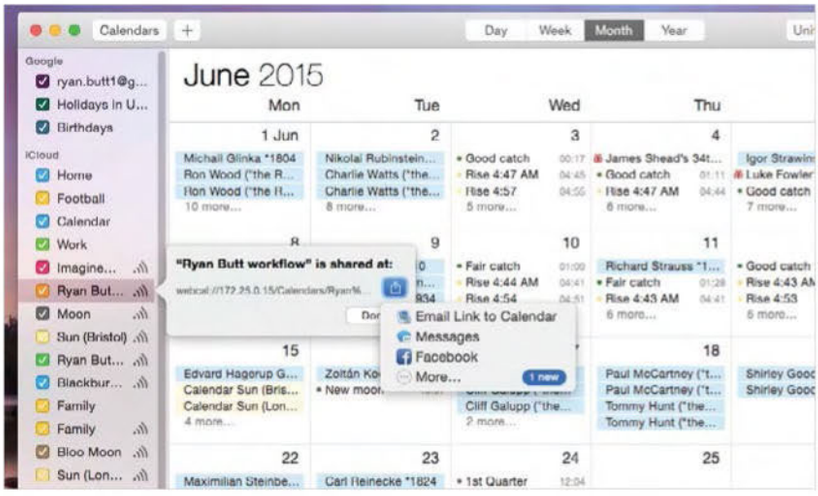
Adding calendars
View all calendars via one interface

You can add a variety of extra calendars to view through the Calendar app, such as the birthdays of all of your Facebook friends.

Click on the top-left Calendar option in the menu bar and choose Preferences, then click on the Accounts tab followed by the followed by the '+' icon in the lower-left corner. You will then be able to choose an account to add.

If you have included Facebook, go to the General tab and click the 'Show Birthdays calendar' option to see them in the Calendar app.





"You can share calendars with contacts by clicking on the Wi-Fi icon"

Enabling and disabling calendars
How to determine what information to display in the Calendar app

If you click on the 'Calendars' button in the top-left corner of the interface, or click on the View menu and choose the 'Show calendar list' option, then all of your available calendars will be displayed in a list to the left of the interface. Here you can tick or untick the boxes next to the calendars to display or remove them from the main view. You can also share calendars by clicking on the Wi-Fi icon next to a calendar in the list and then clicking the share icon.

Maps

Never get lost again with the feature-packed Mac Maps app, which puts the whole world at your fingertips

The Maps app is a fascinating, relatively new addition to Mac OS X that lets you explore the world from your desktop. It's a great way to discover new locations and how to reach them, as the intuitive interface lets you quickly search for locations by keyword, get step-by-step directions to and from the location, save it as a favourite for easy access at any time, and share the location quickly and easily with other people.

You can also determine how the maps look, from a standard-style road atlas view to a photo-realistic satellite view, and layer them with optional extra info such as traffic conditions. If you have ever used the Maps app on your iPhone or iPad, then you will be able to jump straight in and hit the ground running with this Mac version as it is very similar, both in terms of the way it looks and works. The two app versions are also linked together, as you can find directions on your Mac and send them straight to your iPhone to help you find the location while in transit. Read on to find out more.

Directions
You can get step-by-step directions to any location in the world that can be tailored to suit your mode of travel – be it by foot or by car

Change views
You can switch between the standard and satellite views to change the appearance of the map, and also layer additional info such as traffic, by clicking the Show menu

Share locations
Clicking on the share button lets you share your location with other people or send directions to your mobile iOS device from your Mac

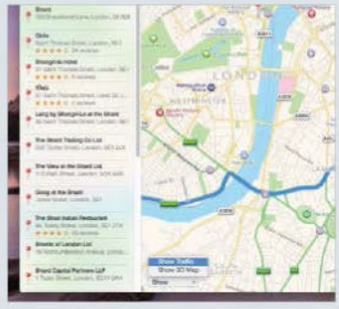
Search field
Enter keywords or postcodes to find locations in the Maps app. Any possible matches will then be displayed in a list for you to select from

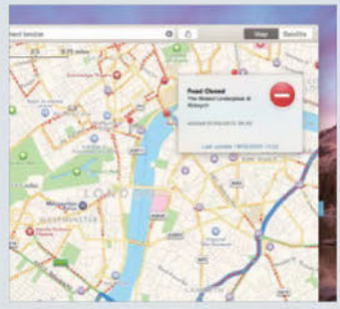
"Get step-by-step directions to and from the location, save it as a favourite and share it with others"

Show the traffic

Check road conditions before you travel

We often set out on a journey blissfully unaware of what the traffic conditions are like on our chosen route, then get stuck in a tailback. Armed with the Maps app, though, you need never run into unforeseen congestion again. When you are planning a route to a particular location, click on the Show menu in the lower-left corner of the map and then choose the Traffic option. This will not only display areas of congestion on the route, but also roadworks, road closures and anything else that may affect your journey.

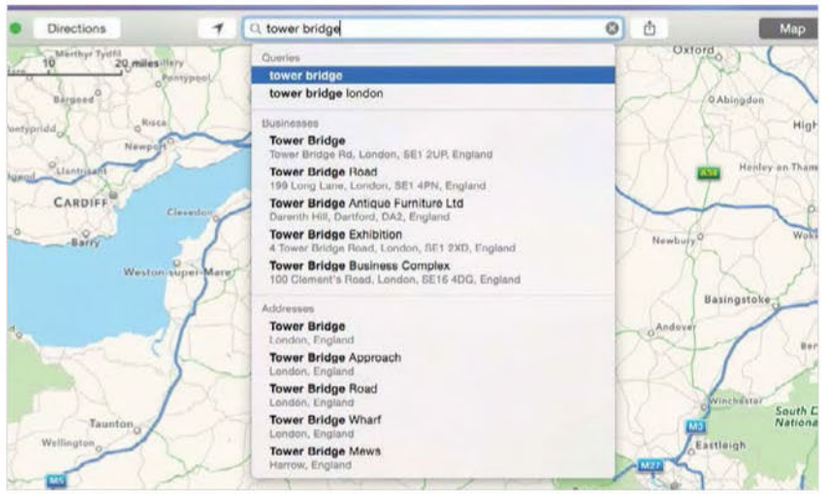




Find locations
How to find particular places in the Maps app

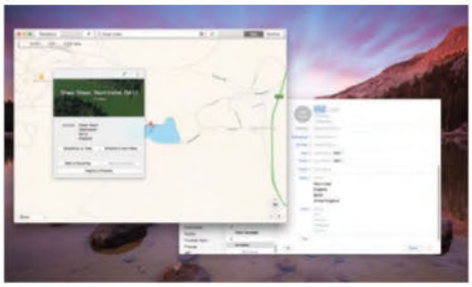
The simple interface makes it easy to find locations in the Maps app. Start off by entering keywords into the search field at the top of the screen and any possible matches will be instantly listed for you to click on and select. If multiple matches are found, then they will be marked as pins on the map; their geographical location on the map may help you narrow down to the specific location that you want. Any locations you search for will be recorded in your search history, which can be viewed simply by clicking on the search field.

"Enter keywords into the search field at the top of the screen"



Saving locations
Keep favourite places close at hand

Once you have searched for a location, established that it is the right one and marked it as a pin on the map, you can then save it. Start off by clicking on the pin to display the name of the location and then click on the small 'i' icon. You will now see options to 'Add to Favourites' and 'Add to Contacts'. To access your Favourites, click on the search field and then choose the Favourites option from the menu. If you opt to add the location to your contacts then a new contacts sheet will be created, based around the information available.

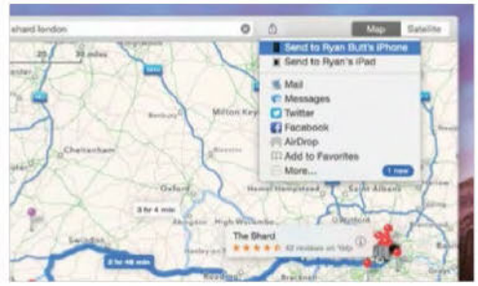


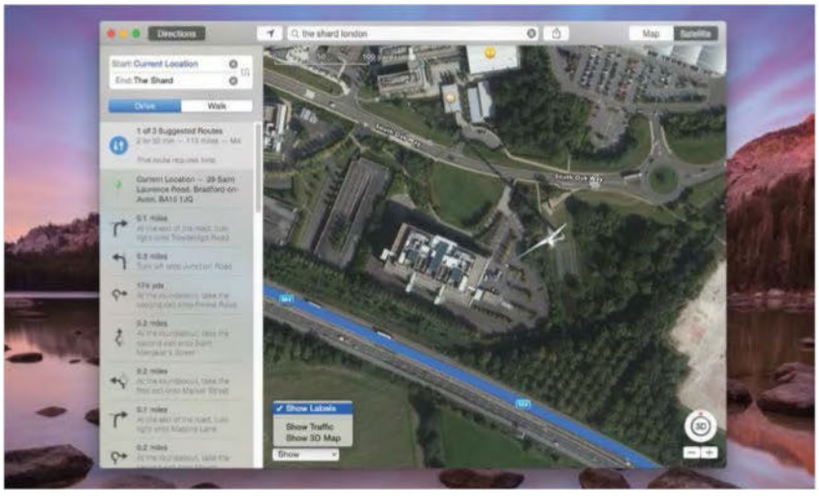
Getting directions
Discover how to get to and from a location

The Maps app is brilliant at helping you to get from A to B by the best possible route. Once you have searched for a location and it is marked as a pin on the map, you can either click on the 'i' icon and choose the 'Directions to Here' or 'Directions from Here' option, or click on the blue car icon to the left of the place name as it appears on the pin. Several routes will be mapped out for you, complete with a list of turn-by-turn instructions and an estimated journey time.

Send directions to iPhone
Sync locations and routes

Thanks to the big screen and keyboard, many will find using the Maps app on their Mac considerably easier than on their iPhone. However, there is no reason why you can't find locations on your Mac and then send them to your iPhone so that you can use that device to get the directions while you are on the move. Simply click on the share button to the right of the search field and choose the 'Send to iPhone' option. A notification will then appear on your iPhone, which you can tap on to instantly get the directions.





"The Satellite view's aerial photographs can be much more visually engaging"

Changing views
How to switch between standard and satellite views

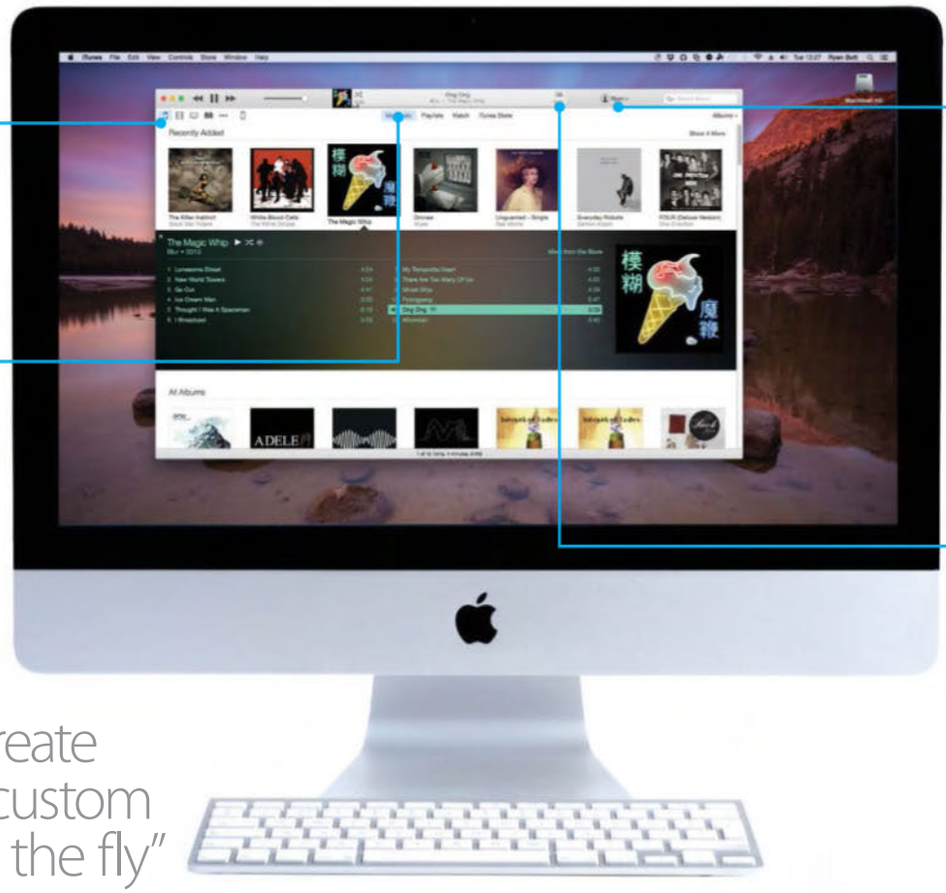
The standard Maps app view is all well and good if you're working exclusively with road names. But if you wish to use landmarks as a means of finding your bearings, then switching to the Satellite view presents the maps as aerial photographs that can be much more visually engaging. To make the switch, click on the Map or Satellite button in the top-right corner of the app. The Satellite view lacks information by default, so click on the Show menu and choose the Labels option to reveal the place and road names.

iTunes

Get the most out of iTunes 12 and keep your personal library neatly organised with our essential tips and tricks

Mac users will be well accustomed to iTunes, as it is the best way to organise and enjoy the media that you own and the quickest and most efficient means of shopping for the music, movies and TV shows that you'd like to buy. The app has gone through many different incarnations through the years, ultimately arriving at where is it now – iTunes 12. But the latest version is quite a departure from the app of old and several new features have been incorporated, as well as the interface itself being given a fresh lick of paint.

Here we show you some of iTunes 12's lesser-known features and some cool tips and tricks to help you better manage and organise your library. Whether it's editing track information or manually incorporating the album artwork to ensure your music library is complete and looking the part, we're on hand to offer expert advice. We also provide a few handy shortcuts to accessing the MiniPlayer and creating quick and easy playlists on the fly.



Toolbar
Your iTunes content, such as Music, Movies and TV Shows, will be accessible via this row of icons. Connected iOS devices will also be displayed here

Section tabs
Use these tabs to jump between your content and the iTunes Store, where you can shop for new items to purchase and download to your collection

Your account
The name of your iTunes account will be displayed here. Click on it to view your Wish List, purchases and more

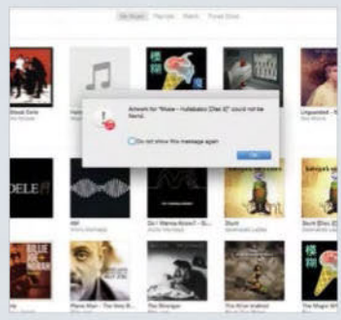
Up Next
You can create your own custom playlists on the fly with the Up Next feature. Click here to see what tracks are lined up to play

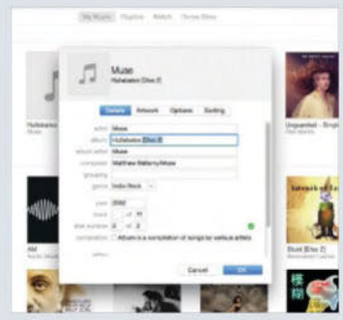
"You can create your own custom playlists on the fly"

Editing info

A workaround to get missing album artwork

Occasionally, you may import a CD into your iTunes library and it fails to include the album art. If you right-click the item, choose Get Album Artwork and it still doesn't appear, it usually means that the metadata for the album is slightly different to that of the Gracenote database. To get around this, right-click and choose the Get Info option, then do a few minor tweaks, like removing info such as disc number from the title, or changing the specific disc number option. Once done, choosing the Get Album Artwork option again should yield the desired results.





See the sidebar
The old favourite gets a temporary reprieve

Although the option of the sidebar is no longer possible with iTunes 12, you can view something similar by clicking on the Playlists tab at the top of the window. This will list all of your playlists, as well as purchased content and Genius Mixes, and resembles the old-school iTunes interface. You will also find options at the bottom of the list to create new playlists and edit existing playlists via the '+' and cog icon menus. An option under the latter also lets you check for purchased content that hasn't been downloaded.

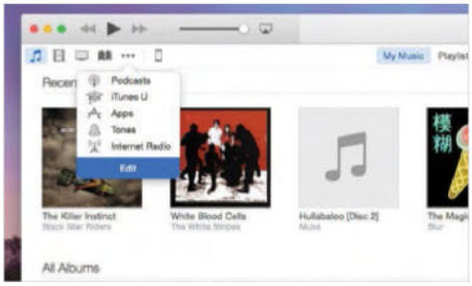
"The sidebar in the Playlists tab resembles the old-school iTunes interface"

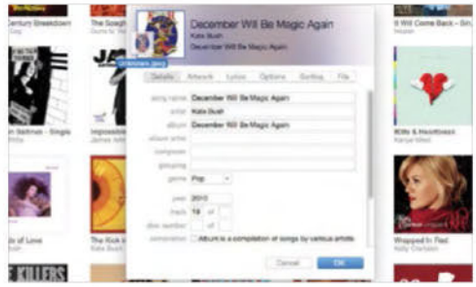
Your personal toolbar
How to find your content easily

Situated beneath the playback controls in the top-left corner of the iTunes 12 interface is the toolbar, which provides instant access (via icons) to your music, movies, TV shows and books.

The three-dots icon provides a drop-down menu to other sections, including Podcasts, Books, Apps and Tones.

If you connect other devices, such as iPhones and iPads, then they will also be displayed as icons in the toolbar. Select the Edit option under the three-dots menu to choose which icons are displayed.



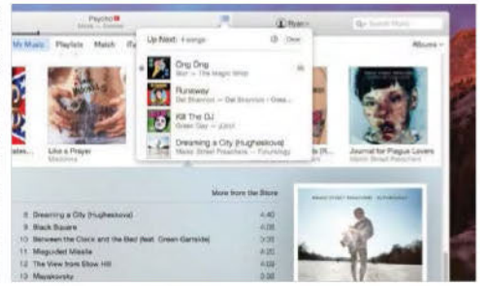


Manually adding artwork
No album artwork displaying? No problem

If your hunt for album artwork still proves fruitless after making slight amendments to the disc info (see the 'Editing info' boxout on the previous page), then you can effortlessly add it manually, should you so wish. To do this, right-click on the item and then choose the Get Info option. Bring up a Safari window and perform a search for the album in question, drag the artwork to your desktop and then drag it into the square window at the top of the Get Info box. Job done.

Temporary playlists
Line up a selection of tracks to play

It's all well and good creating playlists, but if you just want to line up a selection of your favourite tracks to play while you work then a useful feature is build into iTunes 12 that lets you create mini playlists on the fly. Simply navigate to a song, hover the cursor over it and then click on the three-dot icon that appears next to the track. Now choose the 'Add to Up Next' option and the track will be placed in a queue. To view what's 'Up Next', click on the list icon to the right of the name of the current track at the top of the screen.



"If you want quick and easy access to your music, the MiniPlayer is just the ticket"

Enable MiniPlayer
The less obtrusive way to control your music

If you're working on your Mac and want quick and easy access to your iTunes music player, the MiniPlayer is just the ticket. It lets you control the tunes through a unobtrusive player that can hover anywhere on your screen. To access this quickly, start playing a track and then hover your cursor over the album artwork at the top of the iTunes interface. When the small square appears, click on it and the MiniPlayer will be displayed. Click on the square icon near its top left to make it even smaller. Click the 'X' icon to return to the main iTunes window.

App Store

Explore an exciting world of hot new apps for your Mac through the packed and inviting App Store

The App Store is a relatively new addition to the Mac operating system that is more in-keeping with the iOS used by iPhones and iPads. The idea is that you can visit one central store to obtain all of the apps for your device quickly and easily through one ID and one payment system. When you visit the Mac App Store, you will discover that it is packed full of content to suit your needs – from addictive and engaging games to apps to fuel your interests, professions and hobbies. Start exploring using the section tabs at the top of the interface or enter specific keywords into the search field and you're sure to find what you're looking for. Purchasing and downloading is as easy as clicking the app price and entering your Apple ID password and, once done, you'll be able to download updates for free, as and when they become available.

All of your system updates also go through the App Store now. So whenever there is an update to your Mac's OS or an entirely new version, the App Store is the place to be in order to grab it.

Store sections
Key sections of the App Store will be accessible via tabs at the top of the interface. Click on these to make finding content to download much easier

Use categories
All of the apps in the App Store are placed in categories. You can explore these categories quickly by clicking the 'All Categories' menu on the Featured page and choosing a specific category

Search field
If you know the app you are looking for or just want to search for specific keywords, click on the search field here and start typing

Quick Links
If you wish to edit any aspects of your account, redeem codes or get additional support for using the App Store, look to the Quick Links section on the Featured page

"If you know the app you are looking for, click on the search field at the top right and start typing"

Downloading apps

Purchasing and installing apps couldn't be easier

To purchase and download apps from the App Store, you need to be logged in with your Apple ID and have your debit/credit card details on file (these can be checked or updated under the 'Account' link in the Quick Links section on the Featured screen). Then it is simply a case of finding an app to purchase, clicking on the price and then confirming the purchase by inputting your Apple ID password again. By clicking on the Purchases tab, you can see the apps you can previously purchased and, if necessary, re-download them again.

Finding content

Three ways to search for content

At the top of the App Store interface is a row of icons, the first three of which are dedicated to helping you find content. The Featured section showcases all of the latest additions to the store, as well as various collections, whereas the Top Charts section displays all of the most popular apps. The third section, Categories, lists all of the 21 categories into which the apps are organised (such as Games, Music, Photography, Utilities), so that you can view the most popular in a specific category.

"The Featured section showcases all of the latest additions to the store"

Recommending apps

If you find something cool, share it with others

If you happen to stumble across an app that looks pretty cool or boasts features that you know a friend has been seeking, then you can effortlessly tell them about it. Simply click on the downward arrow next to the app price and you will see the option to 'Tell a Friend', as well as options to share it on Facebook, Twitter or Messages. If you select the first option, you will be able to enter an email address and message for the person you would like to share the app with.

Get app updates

Make sure your apps are up to date, as well as your system

Once you purchase and download an app from the App Store, you will be able to download free updates for the respective app if and when they become available. In addition, any updates relating to your system software will also be made available through the App Store. To check which updates are available, click on the Updates tab at the top of the interface and then you can click to update one app at a time or click Update All to get them all updated at once.

Redeeming codes

How to input codes to get apps for free

You can use iTunes gift cards to download apps for free from the App Store. To input the code, go to the Featured section of the App Store and then you will see a section called 'Quick Links' over to the right side of the screen. Click on the 'Redeem' link here and you will be able to input the code from your iTunes gift card. The value of the card will then be credited to your iTunes/Apple ID account and you can use it to spend on whatever apps take your fancy in the App Store.

"Explore the banners for links to the best free apps and system updates"

Getting started

This is the place to go if you are new to the App Store

If you are new to the App Store, then there is a special section tailored specifically for you. From the Featured section, scroll down and then you should see a banner called 'New to the Mac App Store'. Click on this and you will be presented with quick links to all of the essential Apple apps, the best and most popular third-party apps, as well as a host of great games. Explore the other banners too, for links to the best free apps and system updates.

Notes

Get down whatever's on your mind quickly and easily with this useful and versatile app

The Notes app is an absolutely essential tool for jotting things down quickly and easily on your Mac. The app loads in seconds and anything you type is automatically saved without you having to lift a finger and, if iCloud is enabled, pushed to all of your other Mac OS X or iOS devices. The app is also highly versatile to suit your needs. For example, if you want to make a list then the Format menu provides options to create bulleted, dashed or numbered lists.

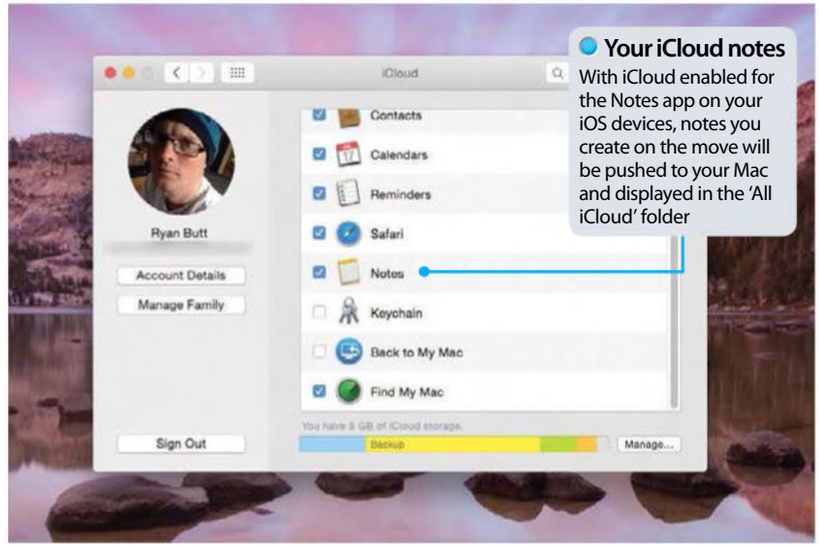
If you want to include images with your notes then you just drag and drop them in and if you want to make the text look punchier then there is a wide range of formatting options available to get the look you want. All of your notes can also be neatly organised into folders so that you can find what you need without any hassle whatsoever. All notes can also be instantly shared with other people via a wide range of services and social networks. Read on to find out more about this handy app.

Sync with iCloud

Get your notes instantly synced across all your other devices

If you own any other iOS devices, such as an iPhone or iPad, in addition to your Mac, then you can get the notes that you create on your Mac instantly synced to your other devices via iCloud. In order to activate this feature, go to System Preferences and then click on the iCloud pane. Now all you need to do is ensure that the Notes box is ticked and whenever you create a new note, it will also appear on your other devices within a short space of time. This can prove extremely handy when making notes such as shopping lists to take out with you.

> "You can get the notes that you create synced to your other devices"

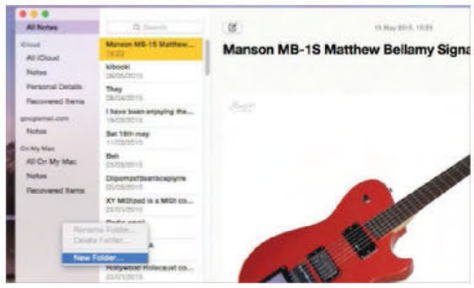


Adding images

Discover how to add images to your notes

If you want to add images to your notes then it really is as easy as locating them in Finder dragging and dropping them into the note itself. Make sure you leave a space in the text and then drag the image into position.

Alternatively, right-click on the note and then choose the Import Image option from the menu. You will then be able to select an image from a connected camera, scanner or iOS device to import and use in the note.



Display your folders

Keep track of your notes by staying organised

Although not displayed by default, you can view your note folders by clicking on the View menu and selecting the Show Folders List option. This will add a column of folders to your Notes interface that allow you to choose notes associated with your iCloud account, email account or Mac. To create a new folder, all you need to do is right-click in this column and choose the New Folder option. You can then organise your notes into folders by dragging them across.

Formatting text

Add flourishes to make your notes really stand out

If you want to format the text in your notes then drag your cursor over it to the highlight the text you wish to modify and then click on the Format menu. You can use the Font option to change the font, make it bold, italicise it or underline it. Select the Show Colours option to change the colour of the text. Further options in the Format menu relate to text alignment, text indentation and lists. Choose the latter to create bullet-point or numbered lists in your notes.

Reminders

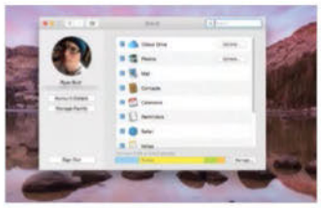
With your Mac's built-in Reminders app, you can ensure you never forget an important task and even set reminders for family members or colleagues

Although we all like to think that our minds are infallible and immune to any lapses that may cause us to forget, the truth is we're all prone to 'brain farts' occasionally that result in important tasks not being carried out.

Thanks to the Reminders app, however, we need never forget anything ever again, because it enables simple reminders to be created quickly and easily. You can make new reminders lists relating to all aspects of your life and then add new entries simply by clicking on the '+' icon. You can then factor in additional details, such as the priority of the reminder, the date and time when you would like the app to remind you, and even get reminded when you enter or leave a particular location. What's more, any reminders that you create can also be shared with other people, such as colleagues or family members – so nobody has any excuses not get those important jobs done. Once you start using this essential app, you'll soon wonder how you ever managed without it!

Sync Reminders with iCloud

Get reminded wherever you are



If you own other iOS devices, such as an iPhone or iPad, as well as your Mac, then you can get the reminders that you create on your Mac synced to your other devices via iCloud. To do this, go to System Preferences and then click on the iCloud option to bring up its window, showing a list of relevant apps on the right. Now ensure that the Reminders box there is ticked and whenever you create a new reminder, it will appear on your other iCloud synced devices too.

Family reminders

Create reminders for your entire household

One of the most useful aspects of the Reminders app is that you can create reminders for other family members and get them beamed straight to their iOS device from the comfort of your Mac. To do this, go to System Preferences and click on the iCloud pane, then click on Manage Family and add family members. Once done, click on Family in the left column in the Reminders app and then add reminders to share with family members.

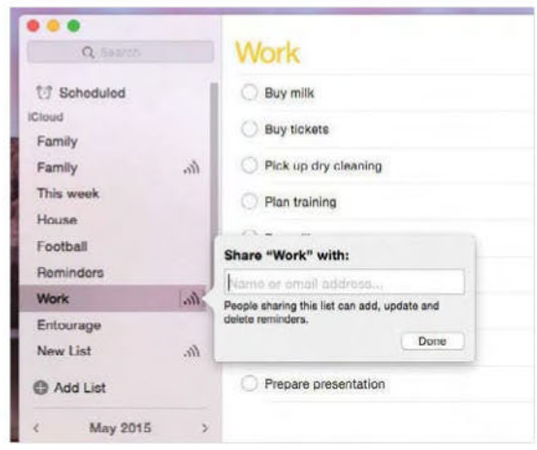
"You can create reminders for other family members"

Set yourself reminders

With the Reminders app you need never forget a thing again

Adding details
Hover your cursor over a reminder and click on the 'i' icon to set the priority and also opt whether to be reminded at a date and time or at a location

Create a new reminder
Tap on the '+' icon to create a new reminder in a list. You will then be invited to name the task. Once you complete it, click the circle next to the reminder to mark it as done



Share reminders

You can share reminders with anyone quickly and easily

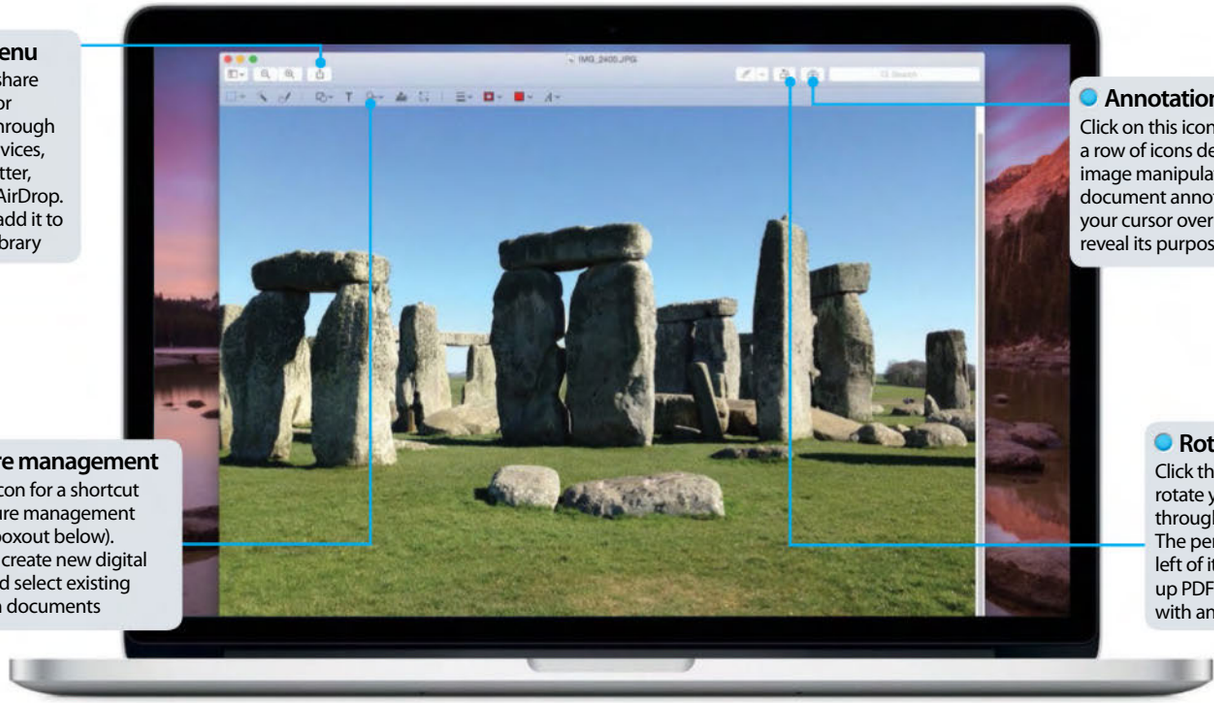
Any reminders that you create can be effortlessly shared with other people. In the column on the left side of the app, hover your cursor over a list name and a Wi-Fi icon will appear to the right. Click on this and then enter the name or email address of the person whom you would like to share the list with. Once it has been shared, the other parties can add, update or delete reminders from the list. This is particularly useful for work purposes, when managing teams and collaborating on projects.

Preview

The surprisingly versatile app that lets you edit and manipulate images and PDFs

Those in the know will fully appreciate the value of the Preview app, but if you have never really used it before then you could be missing out on one of your Mac's best and most versatile apps. If you drag images or PDFs into the app, then it will provide different sets of tools to let you edit and manipulate them.

For example, with PDFs you can mark them with highlighter tools, add pop-up notes and strikethroughs, create and place digital signatures and even reorder the flow of the documents and merge additional documents to create master documents. On the other hand, if you choose to import images then you can adjust the colours, flip them and use a wide range of smart selection tools to select and manipulate different aspects of the image. We're sure that you'll be mightily impressed with what Preview can do – so read on to discover more ways in which this app can save you a packet on more specialist photo and document manipulation apps.



Share menu
Click here to share your images or documents through a range of services, including Twitter, Facebook or AirDrop. You can also add it to your iPhoto library

Annotation toolbox
Click on this icon to reveal a row of icons dedicated to image manipulation and document annotation. Hover your cursor over each icon to reveal its purpose

Signature management
Click on this icon for a shortcut to the signature management section (see boxout below). Here you can create new digital signatures and select existing ones to use in documents

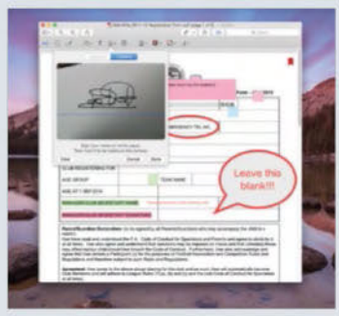
Rotate image
Click this icon to rotate your image through 90 degrees. The pen icon to the left of it lets you mark up PDF documents with annotations

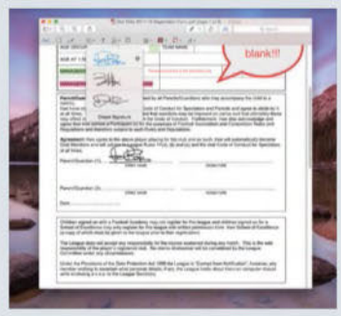
"The pen icon to the left of the rotation one lets you mark up PDF documents with annotations"

Create a digital signature

How to apply your personal signature to PDFs

Through the Preview app you can scan in your handwritten signature and effortlessly import it into any PDF that requires signing. To get started, click on the Tools menu, highlight the Annotate option, choose Signature and then Manage Signatures. Now click on the Create Signature option and the app will use your Mac's camera as a scanner. Simply sign your signature onto a piece of paper, hold it up to the camera and it will be scanned and added to the signature menu, ready for selection. You can now add it to any document.





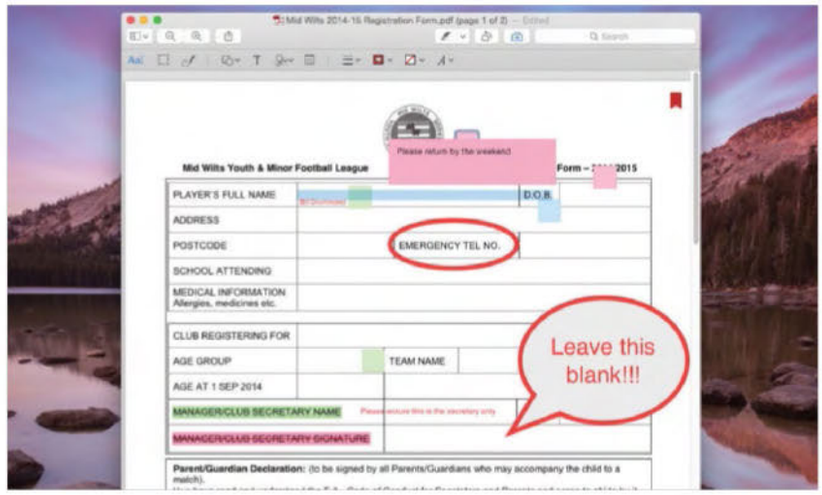
Annotate your images and PDFs

Draw shapes, arrows and text boxes onto your documents

The Preview app comes with a handy set of annotation tools, which you can access by clicking on the toolbox icon to the left of the search field – or alternatively, clicking on the Tools menu and choosing the Annotate option.

You can mark up documents with all manner of shapes, strikethroughs and pop-up notes to get your point across – and everything can be easily dragged around the document and moved into position with the minimum amount of fuss. This is just one of Preview's many great features exposed.

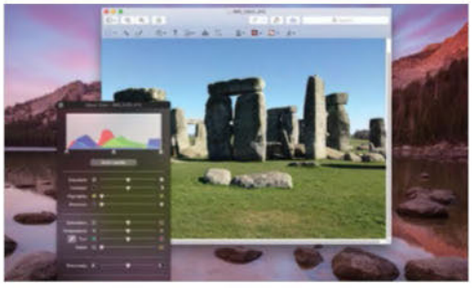
"Preview has a handy set of annotation tools"

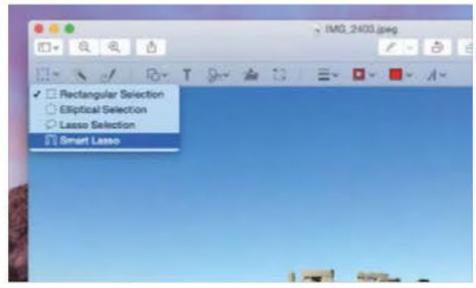


Adjust image colours

Make quick and easy edits to your images

Through the Preview app you can also make simple edits to images. For example, in the annotation toolbar you can click on the prism icon to reveal the Adjust Colour pane, whereby you'll be able to adjust the exposure, contrast, highlights, shadows, and saturation of your image, and more. You can also sharpen the image to make it look crisper and better defined to the eye. Once you're finished, all changes will be applied instantly, and your update images will be available to share.





Exploring the selection and cropping tools

Who needs expensive photo-editing apps?

Preview comes with a built-in selection of tools to aid rudimentary photo manipulation, including those to extract elements of an image. When you click on the annotation toolbox to the left of the search field and then click on the arrow next to the leftmost tool, you will discover a range of selection tools. These include Rectangular selection, Elliptical selection, Lasso selection, Smart Lasso and, to the right of that menu, an Instant Alpha tool.

Manage and merge your PDFs

Slot in pages to create one master document

Preview is hugely efficient at managing your PDFs. Rearranging your documents is as simple as dragging the pages around in the sidebar until they fall into your preferred order. You can also delete pages by highlighting them in the sidebar and hitting Delete, and merge documents together by opening one of the files and then dragging another into the sidebar of the open document. It really couldn't be easier.

"It lets you browse back through different versions of your image"

Browse image versions

Go back through time to view different versions

If you make multiple changes to a particular image, Preview comes with neat feature that lets you browse back through different versions of it, just like your Mac's Time Machine app. To check out this feature, click on the File menu and then choose the Revert To option, followed by Browse All Versions. You can then view the various edits that have been carried out on the image to get it to its present state. It's a very cool feature that will no doubt come in handy.

Photos

Apple's newest app integrates with iCloud to put all your photos in one handy place

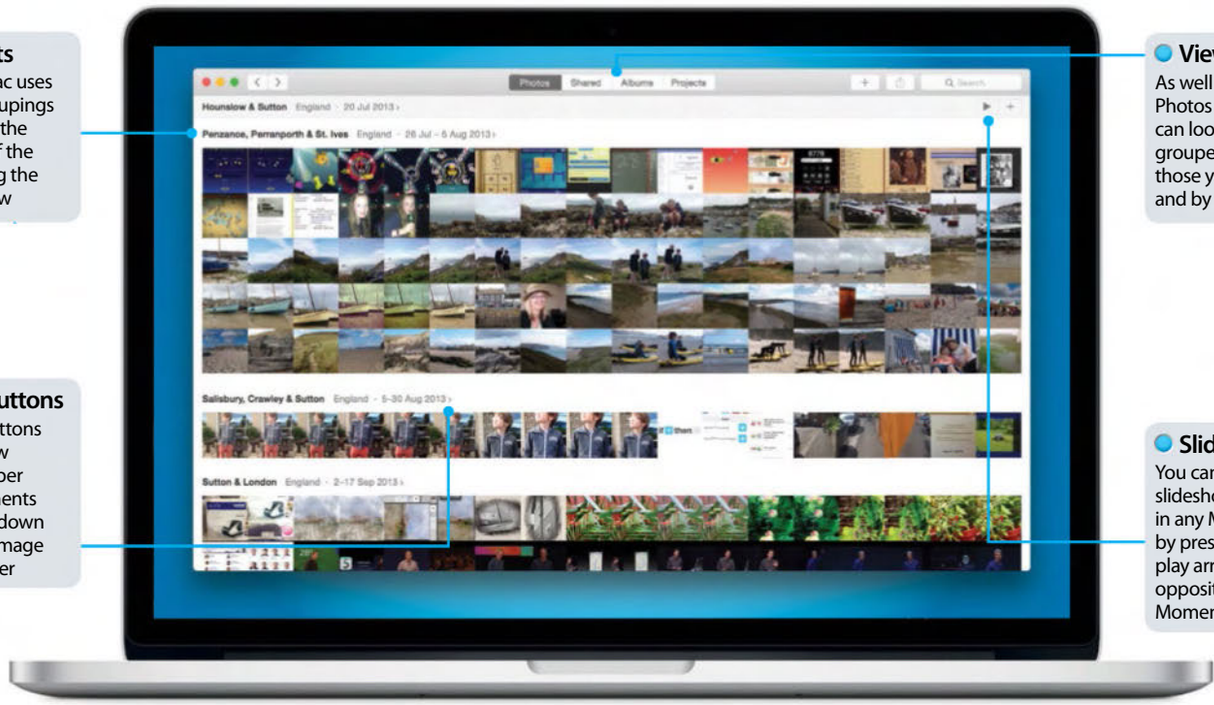
Photos for OS X is the Mac version of the Photos app in iOS 8. As such, it replaces both iPhoto and Aperture on the Mac. And while you can continue to use either of those apps, neither is available to buy or download from the App Store.

The Mac Photos app uses many of the same interface elements as the iOS version and has many of the same features. For example, it knows when a photo you took with an iPhone is HDR and applies an icon label to it. There's also a Share button which allows you to share photos with other people, by email or in Messages, say, or on social media. To share photos on Facebook or Flickr, you'll have to set those up in System Preferences.

The Photos app works best when you sync all your photos with iCloud using iCloud Photo Library. Unless you rarely take pictures, however, you'll need to upgrade your iCloud storage to make full use of this facility. At a mere £2.99/month for a whopping 200GB of storage space, though, it's not too expensive.

Moments
Photos for Mac uses the same groupings for photos as the iOS version of the app, including the Moments view

Arrow buttons
The arrow buttons in Photos view take you deeper into the Moments view, drilling down and making image previews larger



Views
As well as the main Photos view, you can look at photos grouped by Album, those you've shared, and by Project

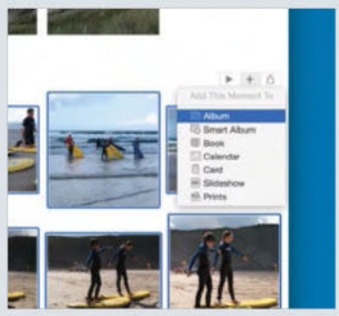
Slideshow
You can watch a slideshow of photos in any Moment by pressing the play arrow button opposite the Moment title

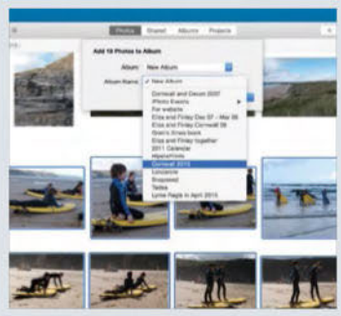
"The arrow buttons in Photos view take you deeper into the Moments view, making image previews larger"

Adding to albums

How to add photos to an album

To add all the photos in a Moments group to a particular album, simply click on the '+' symbol opposite the title of the Moment and choose the Album option from the drop-down menu. To create a new album, just click the relevant option and type a name into the text box in the dialog box that opens. Alternatively, to add the photos to an existing album, choose its name from the menu. You can do the same for individual photos, by double-clicking them and pressing the '+' in the new window. Custom photo selections can be placed in albums as well.

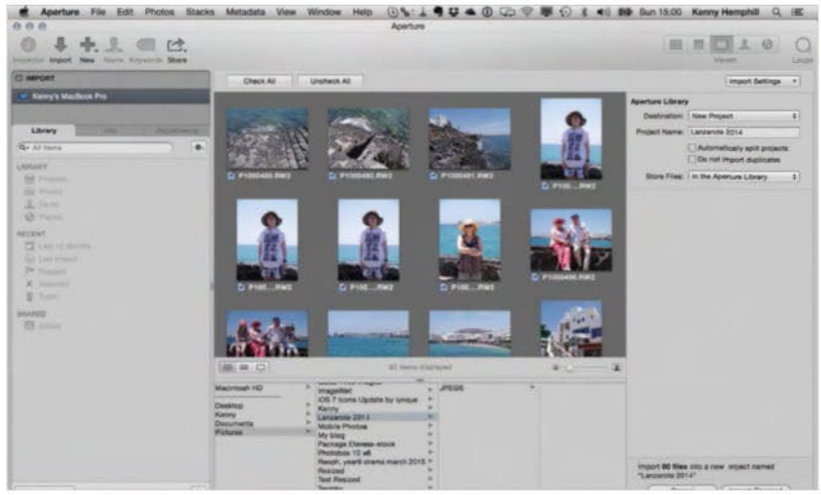




Import photos from iPhoto and Aperture

iPhoto users start here

The Photos app can import either your iPhoto or Aperture library to its main library, but not both. So, before you launch Photos for the first time, launch Aperture, go to File>Import and choose Library. Navigate to the iPhoto Library in your Pictures folder and select it. When it's done, close Aperture, launch Photos and when it asks which library you want to import, choose the Aperture Library. It will now import all the photos from your combined libraries.

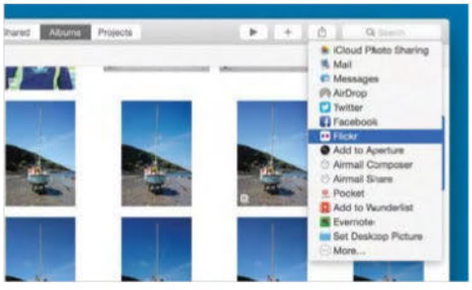


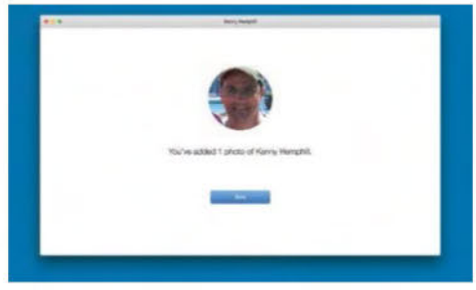
"Photos can import either your iPhoto library or your Aperture library"

Share a photo on Flickr

Add a photo or album to your Flickr or Facebook page

Go to System Preferences and click on the Internet Accounts option to bring up its window. Add your Facebook and Flickr accounts to the approved list. In Photos, find the photo you want to share and click on the Share button at the top right of the window. Choose how you want to share it. For Facebook, choose who you want to share it with and write a post to accompany the post. For Flickr, type in a title and description, then choose the photo set you want to add it to.





Identify detected faces

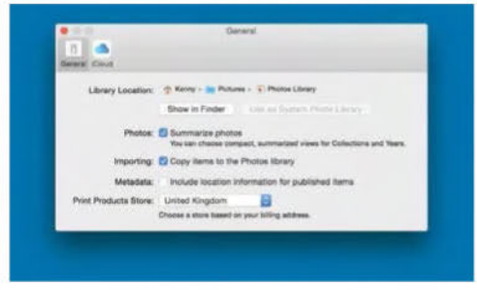
Put names to the faces that the Photos app finds

Just like iPhoto and Aperture, the Photos app attempts to detect faces and all the images associated with them. When you first use Photos, it will display selected Faces in a row at the bottom of the window. If there are any which aren't faces, or that you don't want to identify, click on them and press Delete. For the rest, double-click on each one and either type their name in the text box that opens or navigate to them in the Contacts list.

Put imported photos in your library

It's the only way to sync them with iCloud

Photos' default behaviour is to leave photos you import from your Mac where they are and allow you to manage them from within Photos. That has its upsides, but means that the photos you import in this way won't by synced with iCloud Photo Library. To change this, go to Preferences in Photos and click on 'Copy items to the Photos library'. You can now add files to the Library by dragging them from the Finder or going to File>Import.



"If your Mac is short on storage, Photos can optimise images"

Save storage space

Optimise photos to keep disk space free

Like the Photos app in iOS, the Mac version has a space-saving option. This means that if your Mac is short of storage, the app keeps smaller versions of the photos you access often (and only thumbnails of the others) on your Mac, while keeping the full-resolution versions in iCloud. Any image edits that you perform are then synchronised with the originals. This helps to save space on your Mac. To switch on the option, go to Preferences in Photos and click on iCloud. Now click Optimize Mac Storage.

GarageBand

Make incredible music with these top tips for getting the most out of the brilliant GarageBand app

GarageBand is an often overlooked app, with many users never even bothering to open it and try out its features. And that's a real shame, because GarageBand is actually a hugely powerful and really well-designed app that can help you create some really impressive musical results. Whether you're recording a live instrument directly into your Mac, mixing a track using the built-in sounds and instruments, or even just recording a podcast or editing an existing track, the tools on offer are well worth a try.

And there are plenty of ways to improve your audio recordings, and speed up your GarageBand workflow – from monitoring your audio to writing out lyrics within the notes section rather than another, separate app. We've gathered together some of our top tips for you to try out in GarageBand, so you'll be mixing and recording like a pro in no time. So let's dive in and get started with this overlooked app – and hopefully convince you it's well worth your time.

Metronome
You can switch the metronome on with this button in the top toolbar and be counted in before your recording starts

Make a note
Click the notes button in the top right and you'll open the Notes panel. Here you can write lyrics for a song, or just ideas for your audio

Extra loops
You can download extra content, including more Drummers and extra loops and instruments, with an in-app purchase

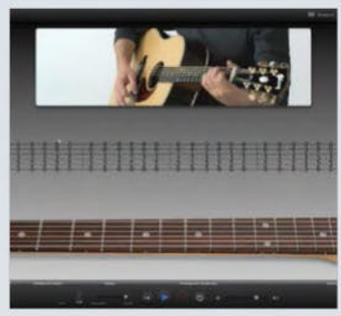
In the loop
Click the loop icon at the top right of the screen and you'll open a page of loops that you can drag and drop into your timeline

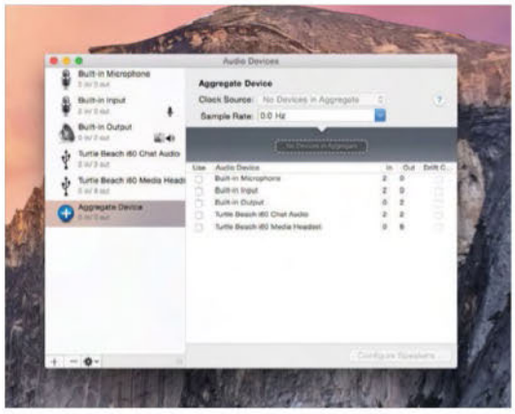
"You'll be mixing and recording like a pro in no time"

Learn an instrument

Get lessons from the pros

GarageBand isn't just an app for recording and remixing music. It also offers beginner-based lessons for aspiring musicians. You can choose to buy a selection of guitar or piano lessons and download them in video form to your Mac – the first lesson is free, so you can get a feel for what's on offer before you decide to take the plunge. Once you've got to grips with the basics, you can move on to the Artist lessons, which will show you how to play a variety of famous songs from some of the most talented players in the world.

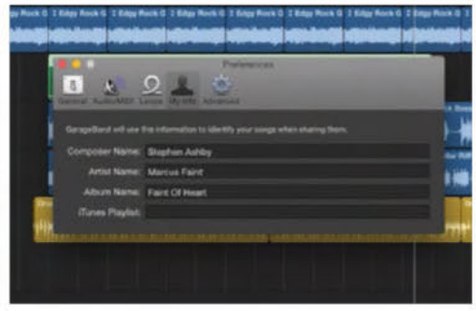




Record multiple devices

Combine audio inputs to create a more diverse sound

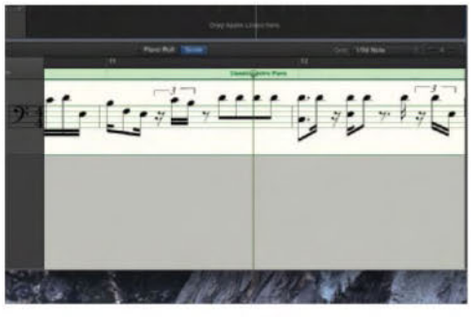
If you're recording instruments live with your Mac, you can choose to record more than one device at the same time, in different tracks, in order to save time and create a more cohesive recording. To do this, you'll need to create what is called an Aggregate device. First, plug in all your instruments, then open an app called Audio MIDI Devices, view your audio devices and create a new aggregate device. Back in GarageBand, select your aggregate device and you're ready to go!



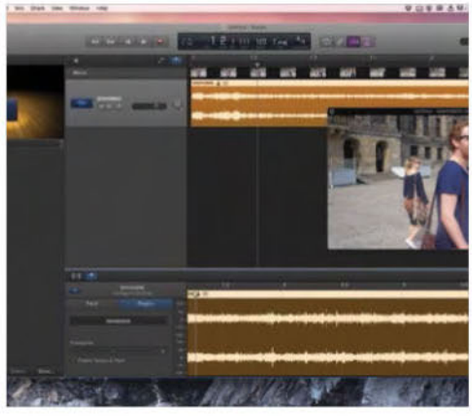
Create a score

Use GarageBand to create sheet music

If you use the built-in virtual instruments in GarageBand to record a track, you will be able to use the notes you've played to create sheet music. You can see and manually edit the score with the Score Editor – which can be accessed by clicking the Editors button. Click on Score to see the sheet music displayed, and drag notes around until you're happy with your composition. If you want a hard copy of it, choose File>Print and you can print the sheet music.



"You can use sliders to change how loud and how complex the drum track is"



Adjust audio from videos

Get the ultimate movie audio experience

While iMovie offers some basic audio editing options, it's really quite simplistic. Fortunately, GarageBand has the answer: you can edit a video's audio within GarageBand, complete with thumbnails that display within the timeline so you have a visual reference. You can then manually adjust the volume and edit out unwanted background noise from your video. When you're happy, export the track and add it to your iMovie project.

Set up your information

Personalise your music with all the details

Whenever you cut a new track, you want it to be clear that you have created it. You can add your details to GarageBand using the Preferences panel, including Composer, Artist and Album names, as well as selecting an iTunes Playlist to add it to. Enter these details by choosing GarageBand>Preferences and opening the My Info tab – then fill in all the relevant boxes that you want.

"You can add your details to GarageBand using the Preferences panel"

Use the Drummer

Get incredible drumming with minimum effort

The latest versions of GarageBand include the brilliant Drummer mode. Using this, you can pick a drummer (all of which offer different styles of beat) and add them to your track. You can then use sliders to change how loud and how complex the drum track is, and choose which parts of the drum kit are featured most heavily. You can even increase the number of fills in your track. Simply click the '+' button to add a new track, then choose Drummer and experiment!

iMovie

Top tips to help you make brilliant videos even faster in iMovie, the marvellous movie-making app

When it comes to video editors, there are few that are as easy to use or as powerful as iMovie. Thanks to its powerful set of features and well-designed user interface, anyone can go from raw video clips to a finished masterpiece in just a few minutes. And the best news of all? It's completely free if you buy a new Mac.

But whether you've been using iMovie for years or are a complete newcomer to the application (or anything in between), there are plenty of useful tips that you might simply not know about. Here, we have brought together some of our favourites, spanning every part of the app. We've got general editing tips to help you create better videos, quick tricks for customising the app's interface, and even advice on getting more from iMovie with hidden settings. No matter whether you are an amateur videographer or an professional editor, hopefully they'll save you time or improve the movie-making process, to help you create an even more polished final project.

Search options
The search bar at the top of the Library window makes it easy to find the clips that you want, and the menu next to it helps you filter your results

Voice-over
You can add a voice-over to your video with this button – just click it to start recording. You can use your Mac's built-in mic, or plug in an external one

Adjust colours
Select a clip and click the Colour Balance or Colour Correction options at the top of the preview window to fix colour problems in your clips while editing

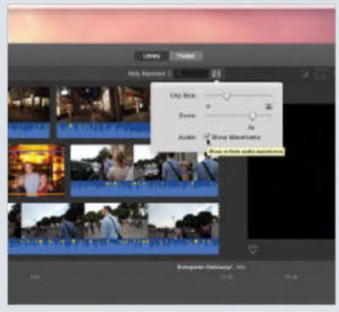
Quick menu
Both the Library and the Project section have this small menu that offers useful options for adjusting the layout of the app

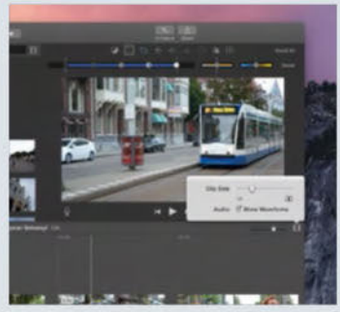
"Whether you're an iMovie veteran or a complete newcomer, we've got plenty of useful tips that you might not know about"

Improve audio

Display waveforms for better sound control

Audio is a vital part of any video you want to make, and the best way to ensure you have great audio is to get as much control over it as you possibly can. In the iMovie timeline, open the Options menu with a click and check the box marked Show Waveforms. This will display the audio waves of any video clips that you have added to the timeline. If you're editing a project that also features a music track, you can either choose to mute the video's audio completely, or to dim the music to ensure that the video's audio can be heard clearly.

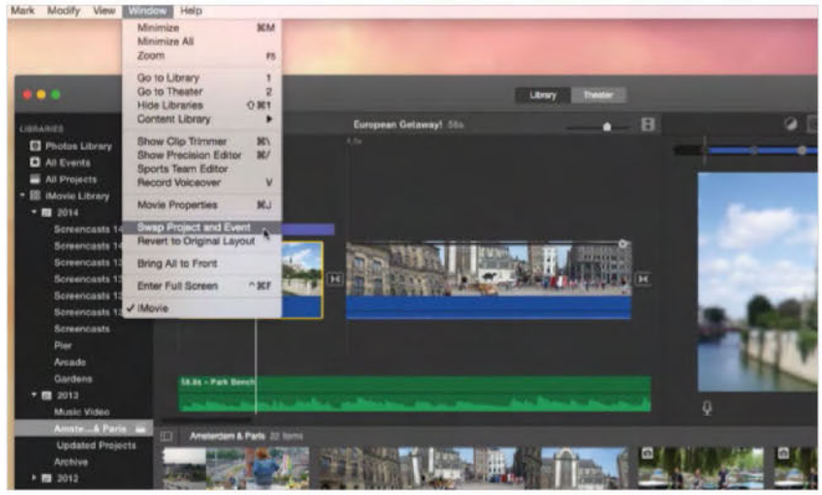




Change the layout
Customise iMovie's interface

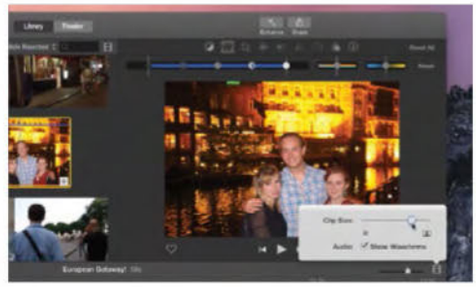
iMovie has a default layout, with each section containing an area of the app that you need. However, you can customise this layout if you prefer a different setup. For example, open a project and choose Window>Swap Project and Event to move the timeline up, to the left of the preview window, and put your clips at the bottom of the window. If you like, you can also close the sidebar with a click to give yourself more room to edit and fewer distractions.

"You can customise iMovie's layout if you prefer a different setup"



Show Skimmer info
Get access to additional clip information fast

When you're editing, it can take many, many hours to watch all your footage back and find the specific clip that you need. At times like this, it pays to be organised. Rename your clips with relevant titles before importing them into iMovie, then choose View>Show Skimmer Info, or hit Ctrl+Y. This will display the names of each individual clip when your hover your cursor over them, helping you to find the clips you want even faster. It can really speed up your editing!



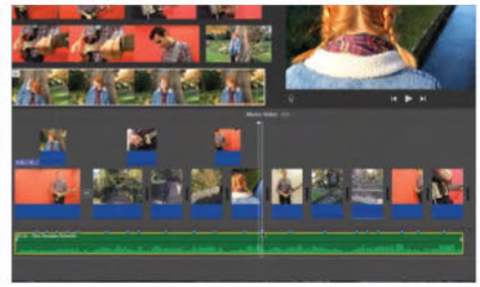
Make things bigger
Resize and manipulate video clips on the go

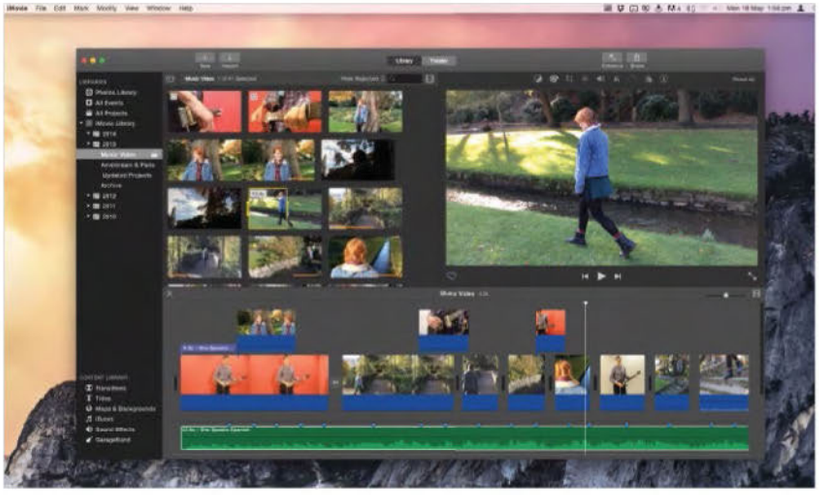
Clip sizes and lengths are a constant wrestling point, especially when you're editing on a smaller screen. If you want to work out which clip is which in your library just by looking, you'll need to click the Options button and use the slider to increase the size of the clips to your preferred size. You can also decrease the time shown in your timeline, stretching out clips to show precisely how long each one lasts, using the slider right next to the Options button.

Cut to the beat
Use iMovie's markers feature for precision edits

Markers can come in very useful when editing; you can use them to note specific moments where you want a cut to be, and this comes in especially useful when editing to music.

First, drop your music track into the project and select it, then hit play. You can tap M at any point in order to add markers along with the beat; then, when you are cutting down the video, you'll be able to do it to these markers. If your timing is right then the cuts will fit perfectly.





"The best way to save time in iMovie is to think carefully about shots when filming"

Short clips are better clips
The best iMovie advice we can give

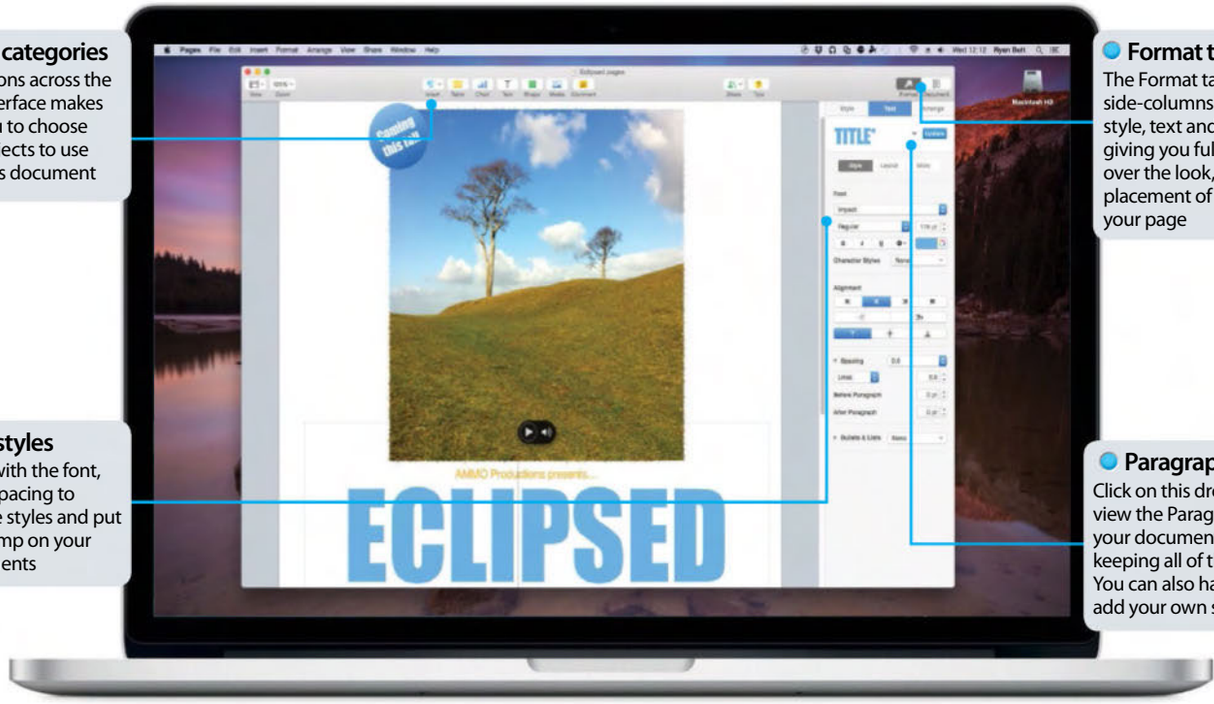
When it comes to making a video, having to trawl through hours and hours of footage for 12 seconds of gold can be a nightmare. The best way to save yourself time in iMovie is to think carefully about shots when filming. Try to take short clips, just 10-20 seconds long, rather than recording for two minutes or more at a time. You can keep recording hundreds of clips and they'll still be easier to sort through to find that perfect moment, because they will all be slightly different.

Pages

Desktop publishing is made easy through Apple's very own highly versatile Pages app

Whether you wish to make posters, presentations or eye-catching flyers, Apple's Pages app is an incredibly versatile beast that makes it easy to realise your ideas and transform them into professional-looking documents.

Through its intuitive interface, everything is placed within easy reach. You can add text boxes, shapes, images, tables, charts – pretty much anything you want. Or to save time, you can even work with pre-installed templates to get instant access to page items that you can then replace with your own. Even if you do opt to use templates, putting your own mark on them is straightforward and all of the tools you need can be found under the Format tab. Just click on an item and you will be provided with a comprehensive sidebar full of options that are applicable. All of the existing elements on the page can also be dragged around and neatly repositioned using a handy set of snap-to grid lines. Here we'll divulge a few additional expert tips to help you get the most out of this app.



Content categories
This row of icons across the top of the interface makes it easy for you to choose items and objects to use on your Pages document

Format tab
The Format tab provides side-columns relating to style, text and arrangement, giving you full freedom over the look, style and placement of the items on your page

Adding styles
Play around with the font, colours and spacing to create unique styles and put your own stamp on your Pages documents

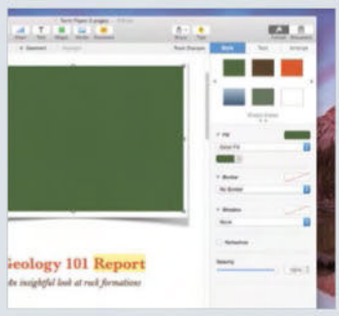
Paragraph Styles
Click on this drop-down to view the Paragraph Styles for your document – handy for keeping all of the text unified. You can also have a play and add your own styles

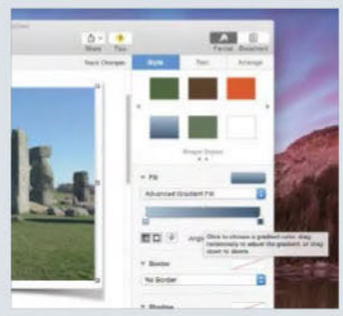
"Play around with the font, colours and spacing to create your own unique styles"

Create filter-like effects for your images

Learn how to make your images look more akin to Instagram pictures

You can utilise a neat trick in the Pages app to give your images filter-like effects. To get started, click on the Shape button at the top of the interface and choose Square. Now drag the square on top of the image and drag the corners to fill the area; now, with the shape selected, click on the Format tab (in the top-right corner) and choose Style. In this column, drag the Opacity slider down to about 25 per cent and then change the Fill option to Advanced Gradient Fill.



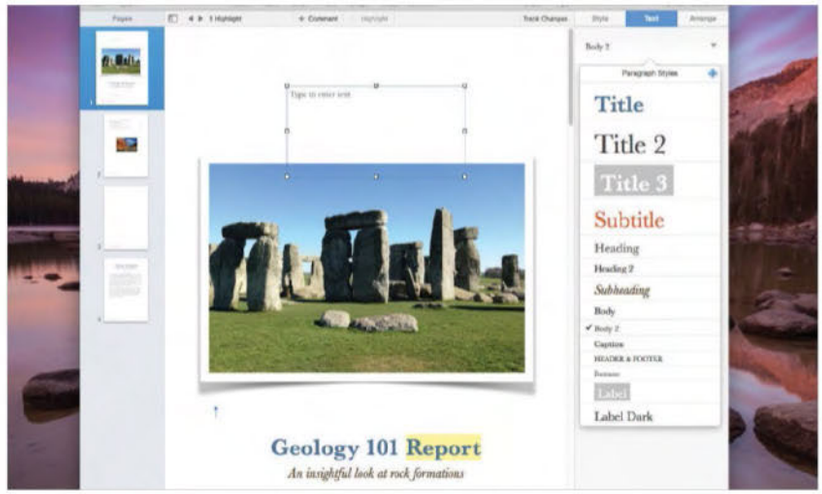


Keep your page styles intact

Keep your text regimented by utilising the styles sheet

Whenever you create a new page in a document, you don't have to go through the rigours of formatting the text manually – instead you can use the Styles menu to keep everything in order. Click on the Format tab in the top-right corner of the Pages interface and then choose the Text tab in the side column. You can then click on the drop-down menu to see all of the available styles. These styles vary depending on the theme that you have chosen for your document.

"The styles vary depending on the theme that you have chosen"



Create your own styles

Put your own stamp on your Pages documents

Of course, you don't always have to go with what's put in front of you, as the Pages apps gives you the freedom to create your own styles too. To get started, click on the Format tab in the top-right corner of the Pages interface and then choose the Text tab in the side column. You can now use the Font, Colour and various other options to format your text. Next, click on the Paragraph Styles menu and click the '+' symbol to create a new style based on your selections.

Override the guides

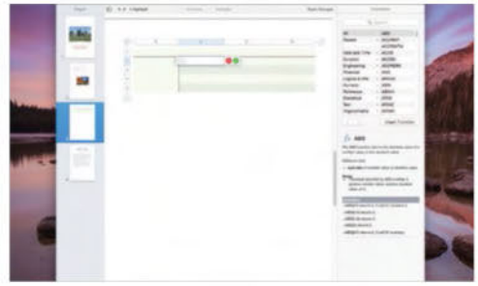
Disable the snap-to guides when positioning objects

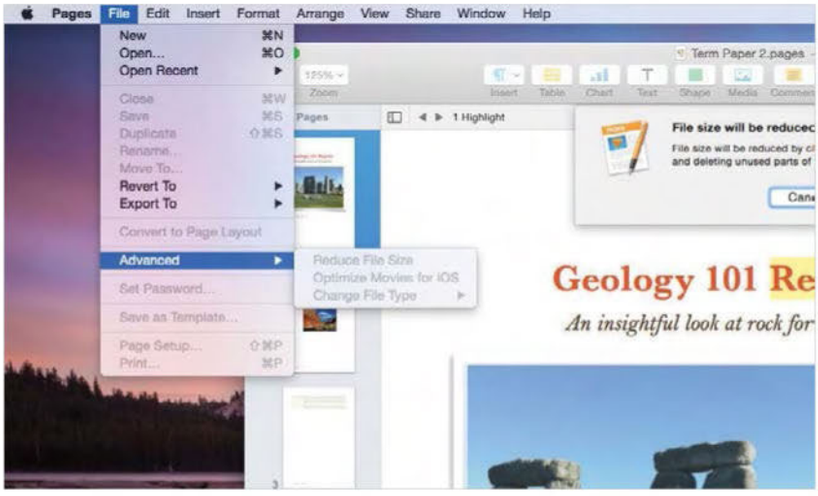
The Pages app uses snap-to guides (the yellow grid lines) to help you line up different elements on the page. These are obviously very useful to ensure that everything lines up neatly. However, if you want to go freehand and place pictures and text boxes exactly where you want, then you can: just hold down the Cmd key when you are dragging objects around. You will notice that the grid lines instantly vanish, meaning that you can place objects anywhere you like.

Create and insert Numbers-style charts

Add surprisingly versatile charts to your documents

You may think that you would need the Numbers app to create charts based on specific formulas, which you then import into Pages documents, but in truth you can just do it all in Pages. Start off by clicking on the Table button at the top of the interface and choosing a table style, then drag it into position, click on any box within the table and then type '=' to bring up the Functions sidebar, which provides all of the formulas you need.





"The file size will skyrocket, making it harder to share documents"

Keep the file size down

Scale down your image sizes to keep your document sizes reasonable

As soon as you start adding your own images and videos to your Pages documents, the file size will no doubt skyrocket, making it harder to share documents via email. A way to get around this is to optimise all of the images so that they still retain their visual quality, but don't have so much of an impact on the document size. To do this, click on the File menu and choose the Advanced submenu, then select Reduce File Size.

Keynote

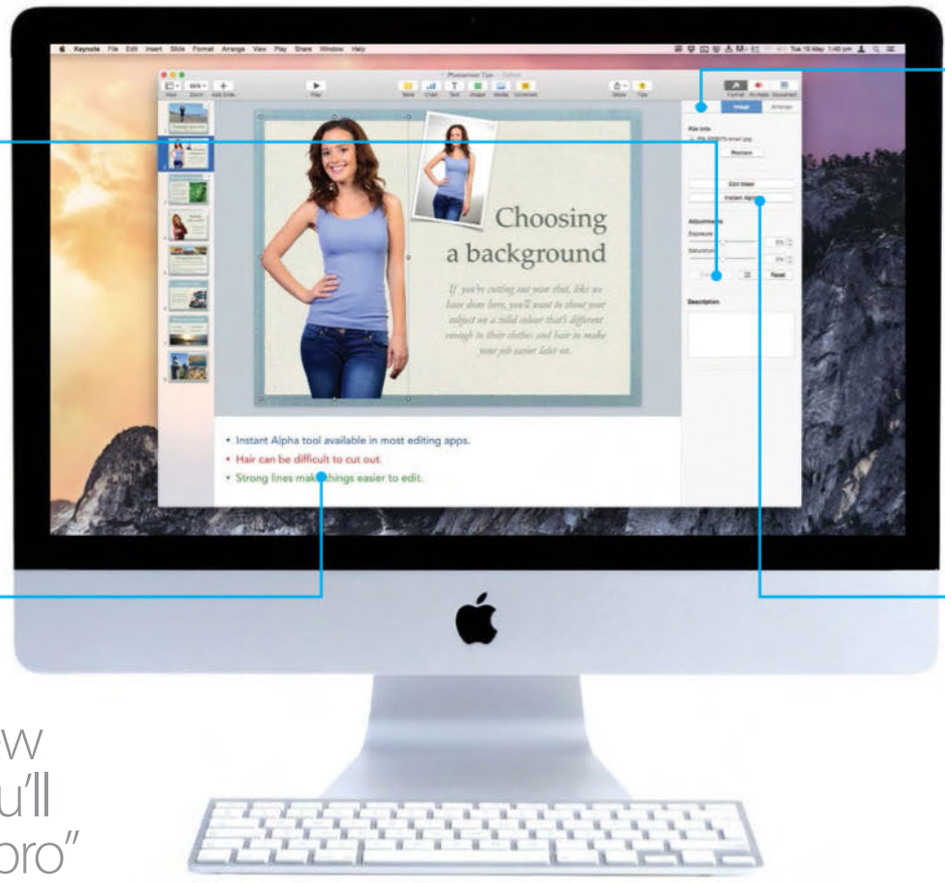
Create stunning presentations every time with our expert tips for the Keynote app

Macs have long been associated with more creative users, with photo, video and music editing being the focuses of Apple's main advertising campaigns. But your Mac can do many things. And, with the iWork suite of Pages, Numbers and Keynote, it's clear that the Mac is incredibly capable when it comes to more 'serious' work.

But what makes these apps (and your Mac) truly great is that even work becomes a little more creative. In Keynote, there are plenty of extra controls to help you add and optimise images, animate text and slides, and even improve your presentations with a neat presentation mode. And, thanks to the fact that Apple makes the app, it's integrated brilliantly into the rest of your system, including iCloud and Photos, to make your presentation even easier to make. Here, we've gathered some tips and tricks to streamlining your Keynote experience even more; within a few minutes you'll become a pro at putting together killer presentations.

Enhance
You can quickly enhance your shots by clicking this button in the sidebar. For more control, click the button next to it, with sliders on

Add notes
You can add presenter notes to each slide; then, when you use Presenter mode, they will appear only to you



Save Styles
If you customise text with different colours and fonts, then save the style in the Format sidebar – then you can quickly apply it to other slides later

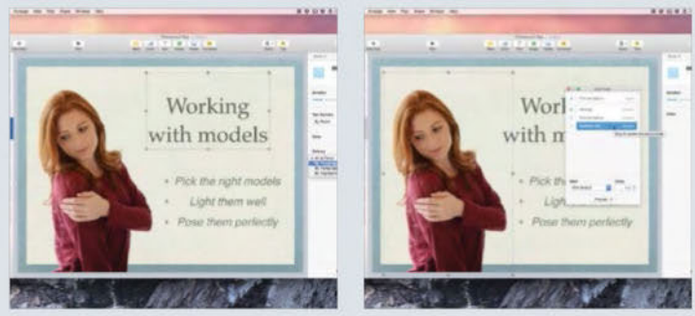
Instant Alpha
Use Instant Alpha to cut out images and leave them with see-through backgrounds. It's in the Image section of the Format sidebar

"Within a few minutes you'll become a pro"

Build orders

Manage animations with ease

One of Keynote's best features is its fantastic ability to animate your slides in a number of really unique and eye-catching ways. You can animate everything from text to images and shapes, and as you add more and more animations, you can manage them all with the Build Orders window. Open the window from the Animate sidebar and you can drag the animations around, putting them in any order that you like. You can even drag one animation on top of another if you want them to trigger their effects at the same time.



Present with iPad or Apple Watch

Use other devices as remotes

Ultimately, you don't make a Keynote presentation unless you want to present it to others. And with Keynote, you can use a number of devices as an assistant as you present. Whether it's an iPhone, an iPad or even an Apple Watch, you can use it to present your work. On any device, simply use the Keynote app in Remote mode and you can use the touch-screen to flip through slides – and on an iPhone or iPad, see the notes you made for each slide.

"You can now use an iPhone, iPad or Apple Watch to control your Keynote presentation"

Create templates

Design your own Keynote themes and customise your presentations

Apple offers a selection of cool templates for you to use to create your own brilliant presentations. However, if you want to make something a little more unique, you can create a customised theme that you can save to the Theme browser to use again and again. To do this, start a new blank presentation, open the Format panel and choose Edit Master Slide. You can then adjust the background, the font of any text, and add any placeholder images you want.

Use masks

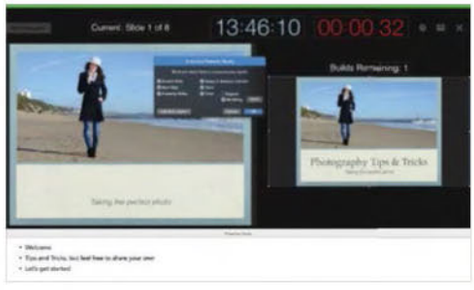
Mask images with shapes to create unique picture frames

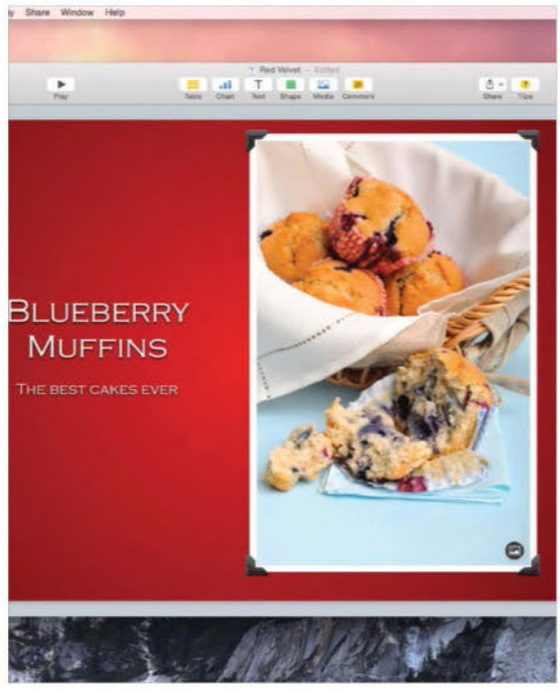
Photos can really brighten up your presentations, and thanks to the power of Keynote you can make them even better by using a variety of different shapes as masks. This means that you can add a shape to your slide then use it as a frame for a photo. The photo will only appear inside the shape – so you can adjust the size of the frame, or zoom the image in or out, to get the best view for your photo.

Customise Presenter display

Create a perfect companion

The Presenter Display is the screen that appears when you are showing off your presentation on a second display. By default your Mac's screen will show the time, the current slide and the next time, but you can choose Play>Customise Presenter Display to add or remove anything you want. You can resize elements, add extra tools, or clean it up totally – it's up to you what appears on the screen before you hit play.





Use Magic Move

Create incredible animations

Magic Move is a brilliant little tool that lets you quickly add multiple animations to a single object with the minimum effort. If you want to keep an item on the screen between two slides, you can use Magic Move to move it automatically. Copy the item onto the next slide, then move and resize it to the next position you want with the Magic Move animation selected. When you switch slides, the item will automatically move and resize, like magic.

"To keep an item on the screen between slides, use the Magic Move feature"

Numbers

Creating efficient spreadsheets is made easy through Apple's very own highly versatile Numbers app

Whether you wish to make budget sheets, mortgage calculators, calendars, schedules or any other type of spreadsheet, Apple's Numbers app is an incredibly versatile app that makes it easy to get your facts and figures down and apply a wide range of formulas and quick calculations to ensure everything tallies up.

Through Numbers' intuitive interface – like Apple's other iWork applications, including Pages and Keynote – everything is placed within easy reach. You can add tables, text boxes, shapes, images, charts – pretty much anything you want. Or to save time, you can even work with pre-installed templates to get instant access to items that you can then replace with your own. All of the existing elements on the page can be dragged around and neatly repositioned using a handy set of snap-to grid lines – just click on the Format tab in the top-right corner and all of the tools you need will be revealed. Here we'll divulge a few additional expert tips to help you get the most out of this app.

Content categories
This row of icons across the top of the interface makes it easy for you to choose items and objects to use on your Numbers document

Format tab
The Format tab provides side-columns relating to table, cell, text and arrangement, giving you full freedom over the look, style and placement of the items on your sheet

Table Styles
When creating new tables, you can use one of many pre-installed templates or make your own modifications using the various categories below

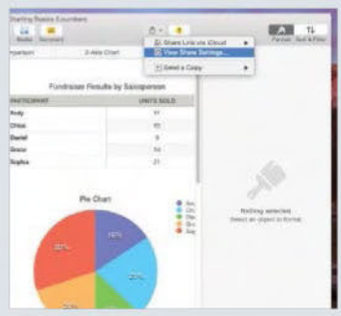
Adding styles
Play around with the font, colours and spacing to create your own unique styles to put your own stamp on your Numbers documents

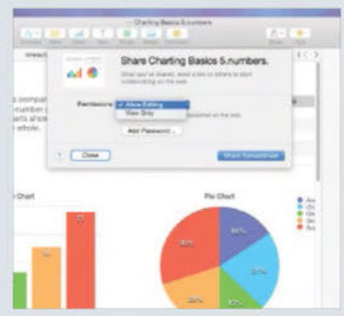
"Use a pre-installed template or make your own tables"

Share your spreadsheets

Learn how to share your sheets with iWork for iCloud

Whereas in previous versions of the Numbers app you could only share your documents with other people as PDFs, the sharing function has now been significantly improved in that you can share links via iCloud and collaborate with other people on spreadsheets. Any changes made to the document in question will be instantly updated, making it a much more versatile system for working remotely from the office. Click the Share button and choose the View Share Settings option to set the various permissions and send work out to your colleagues.

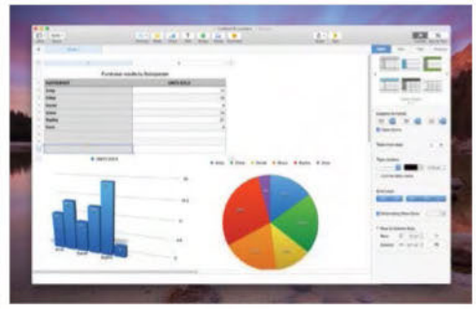


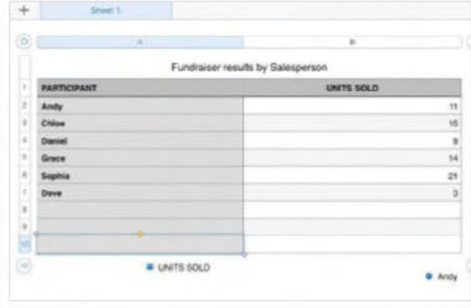


Turn on the tips

Get a little heads-up help with using the Numbers app

Whether you're completely new to the Numbers app or just in need of a little extra enlightenment, you should consider clicking on the Tips button in the top-right corner of the interface. Doing so will bring up a series of pop-up tip bubbles that change depending on what you click on or hover the cursor over. It's a good way to discover and investigate new features of the Numbers app that you may not have explored before. Click the button again to disable these tips.

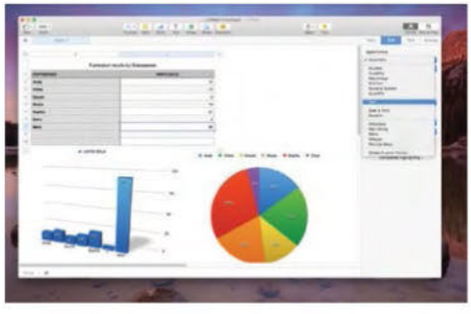


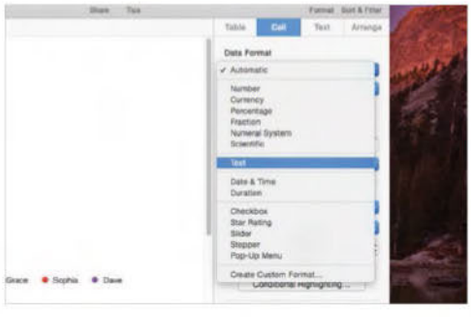


Keeping the zeroes

Ensure that the noughts stay at the start of numbers

If you need to enter figures into your Numbers tables that start with a zero, then it can be infuriating when the Numbers app automatically removes said digit by default. To get around this, select the cell and then click the Format tab in the top-right corner of the Numbers interface; now click on the Cell tab in the side column and then change the Data Format from the default Automatic to Text in order to keep the prefixed zeroes in place.





"Change the Data Format to Text to keep the prefixed zeroes in place"

Instantly view quick calculations

Select a cell to view a selection of common calculations

If you select a number of cells from a table, then a selection of common calculations relating to the cells will be visible at the bottom of the screen. Typically, these include SUM, AVERAGE, MIN, MAX and COUNTA.

If you wish to add one of these quick formulas to a cell, then simply select a number of different calls and drag the quick calculation bubble up to a spare cell.

Add extra rows and columns

A quicker, more efficient way to expand your tables

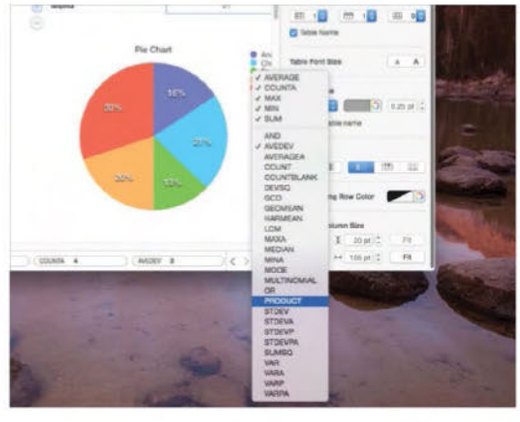
If you wish to add additional rows or columns to your tables, then you can do so quickly and easily by holding down the Alt key (also commonly referred to as the Option key). Do this and then use the arrow keys to add extra rows and columns to the left, right, above or below the currently selected cell. This can help speed up your productivity when compiling your tables.

"Add extra rows and columns quickly and easily by holding down the Alt key"

Add more quick calculations

How to select different quick calculations to apply to cells

To change the selection of quick calculations you can apply to cells, start by clicking on the settings icon next to the common calculations and a pop-up menu will list the available quick calculations. Scroll down through the list and place a tick next to those you wish to add as quick calculations. If you add more without deselecting the original ones, then you can scroll through them using the arrow icons.



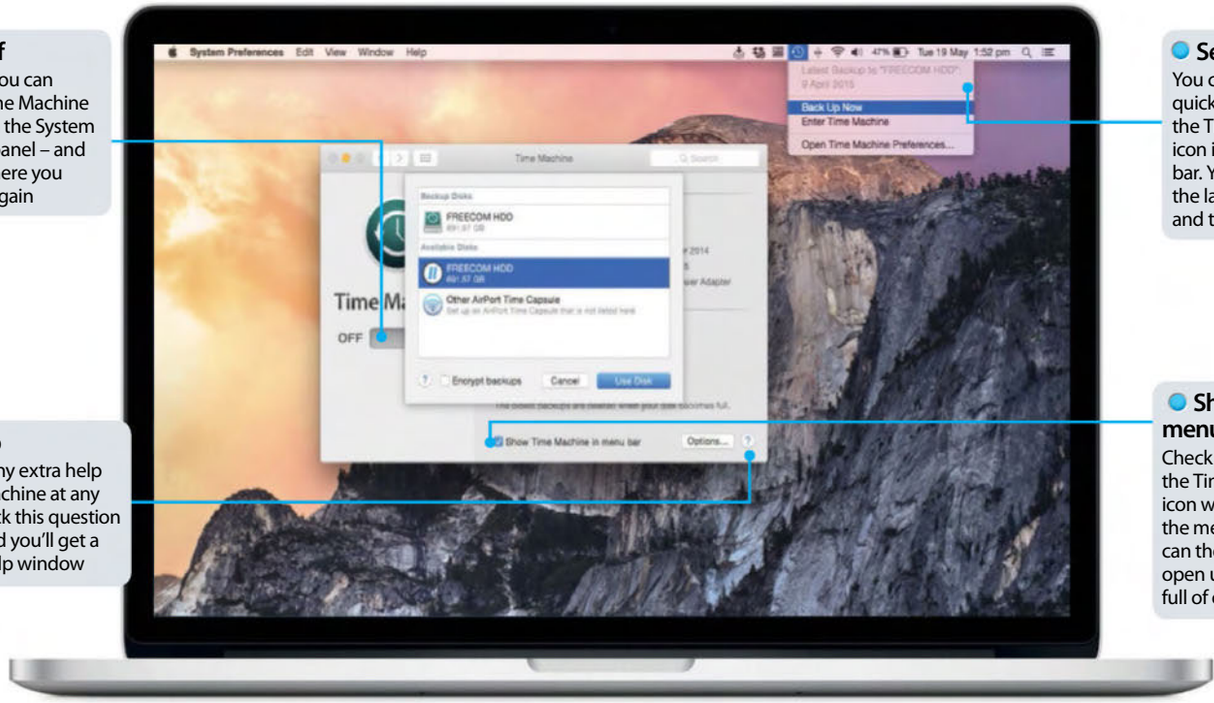
Time Machine

Get better backups of all your precious files with these expert tips

Time Machine can be a life-saver. Use it to automatically back up your Mac to an external hard drive and never again will you have to worry about losing a file or your Mac's hard drive failing. All your files will be safe and sound, and regularly backed up so that the most up-to-date version of each file is always available to you.

What's brilliant, too, is that it's incredibly easy to set up: all you need to do is plug in an external hard drive, then switch on Time Machine from the System Preferences panel. Once it has been activated, the app will automatically save all the files on your Mac to the backup drive and update them whenever they're changed.

But there are a few tips and tricks you can use to make the system even better. Whether it's slimming down your backups, ignoring certain files or securing your backups with a password, there are plenty of ways to power up Time Machine. Read on to optimise your machine and make sure all your files are safe – for good.

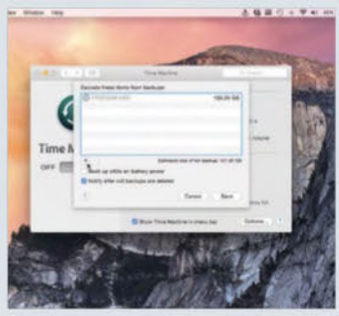


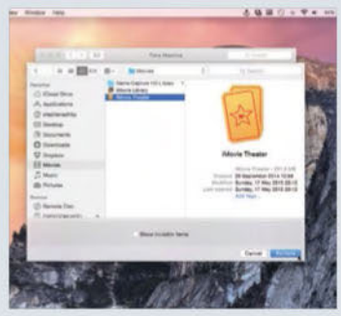
"Time Machine will automatically save all the files on your Mac and update them whenever they're changed"

Excluding items

Pick the files to miss

When you're backing up to an external drive, it's an inevitability that you'll eventually run out of space. Fortunately, Time Machine automatically deletes old files in order to make space for new ones. But there are some files that you might not want to save, or just might not need to have backed up in the first place. These might include a variety of things such as work files that are already saved elsewhere. To remove them, simply click on the Options button in System Preferences, then click the '+' button and select the folder you want to exclude.



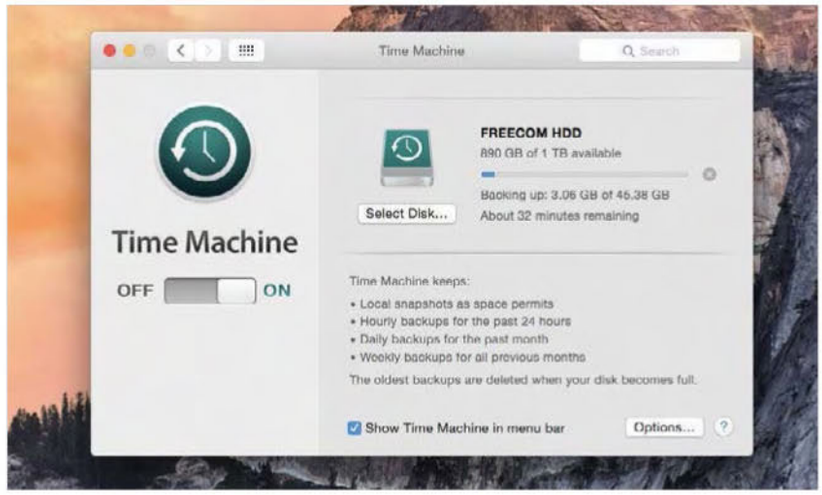


Speed it up

Get faster backups with an improved connection

Big backups can take a long time – that's just the way data transfers work. But if you want to shorten backup times and stop a Time Machine cycle taking hours, your best bet is to change your connection. Modern Macs offer both USB 3.0 and Thunderbolt connections, both of which offer high-speed data transfer. Grab a fast external hard drive and use these connections and you'll find that your data will be saved to the drive much more quickly than with other connections.

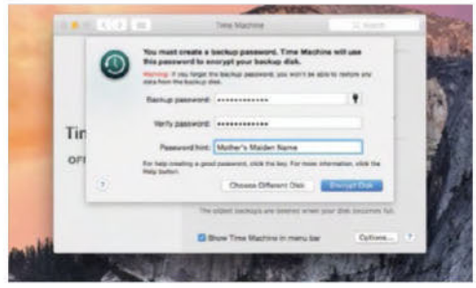
"Modern Macs offer both USB 3.0 and Thunderbolt high-speed connections"



Restore from a backup

Rescue your Mac with Time Machine

There's a good reason why we would always advise readers to back up their devices, whether it's a Mac, iPhone or iPad. But with your Mac it's especially important – you can have irreplaceable photos, videos and documents stored on your Mac, which could all be lost without a backup. Fortunately, Time Machine allows you to restore a broken Mac, or move your data onto a new Mac, without losing a thing – simply plug it in and follow the on-screen instructions.



Encrypt your backups

Secure your data with a password

Some external disks support data encryption for your backups, so if you're at all worried about your data being safe when it's being backed up, this is a great way to add some additional security to your hard drive.

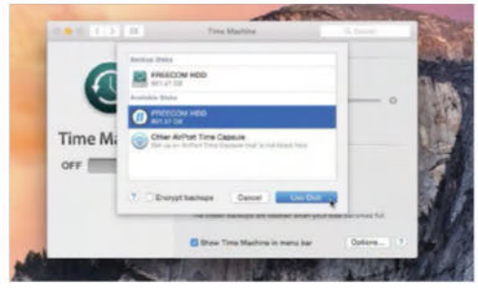
To do it, all you need to do is open the Time Machine section of System Preferences, click on Select Disk, then highlight your disk. If it's supported, click the Encrypt option and you'll be prompted to choose a password. Just make sure you don't forget it!

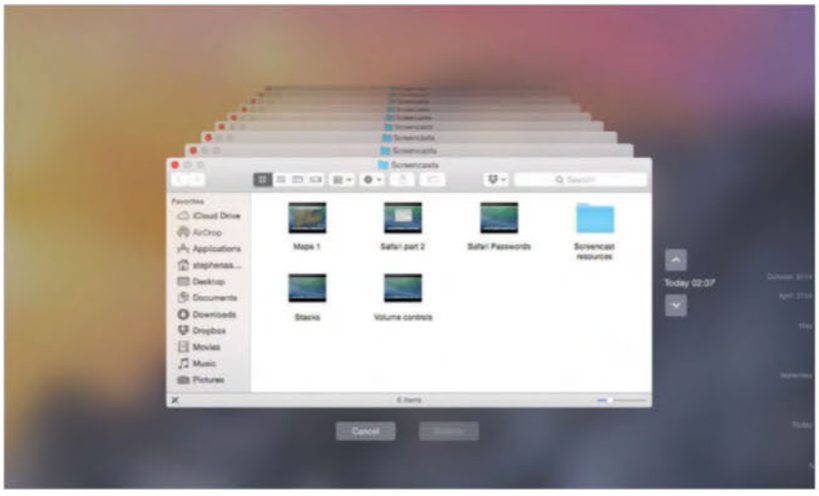
Add extra drives

Ensure your backups always run smoothly

You can add more than one backup disk to your Time Machine if you wish. This will allow you to always be sure that your backups will run on time, even if your primary disk isn't plugged in 24/7. Plus, it's great for scheduling multiple backups, in case one ever fails.

In order to do this, simply choose Select Disk in the Time Machine section of System Preferences, and select any additional available disks that you want to use.





"Time Machine is really handy when you find yourself needing an accidentally deleted file"

Cycle back through folders

Find lost files and folders fast

Time Machine is great for peace of mind: if your Mac is broken, lost or stolen, your data is all safe and sound, and you can recover it to a new or repaired machine instantly. But it's also really handy for when you find yourself needing an accidentally deleted file. At any time in apps like Finder, Pages or Preview, you can choose to Enter Time Machine, then scroll back through backups until you find what you need.

Automator

Make your Mac work for you by automating regular tasks

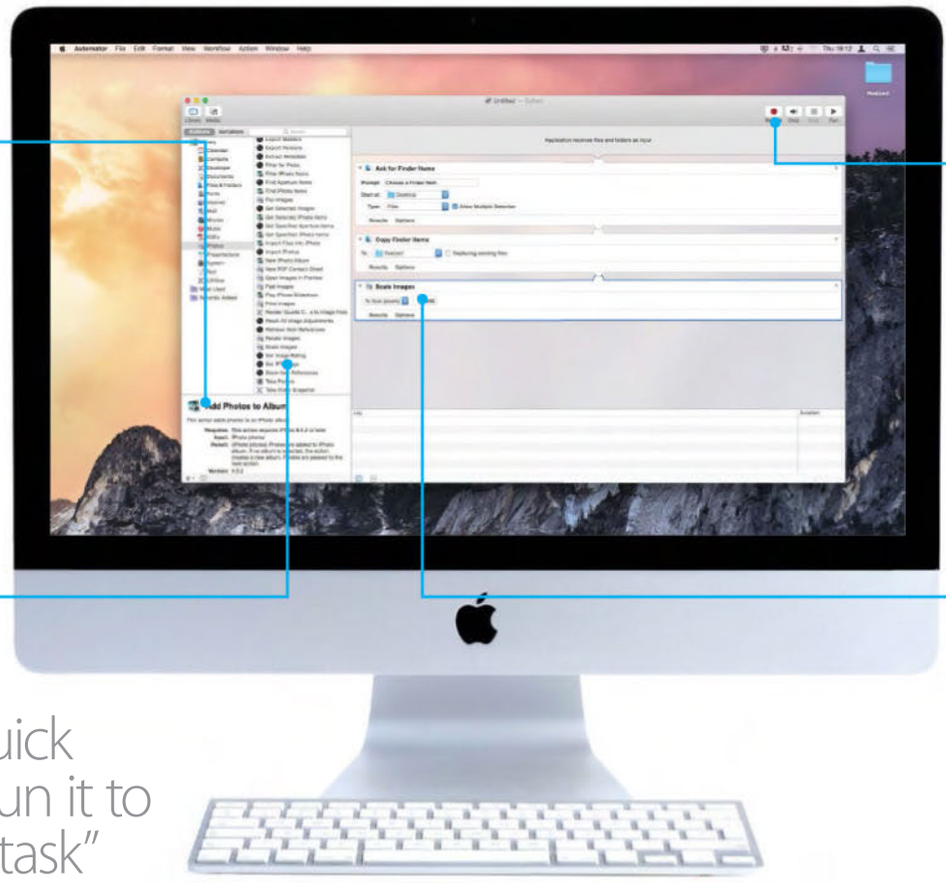
Automator is one of the most often overlooked apps on the Mac, but it can actually help save you hours by helping you to complete regular tasks with the minimum effort. If you carry out a specific task every day, it's likely that Automator could make it as simple as clicking once or twice. For example, if you want to quickly resize photos to save space on your machine, you don't need to do it by opening every file individually in Preview. Instead, create a quick Automator script and run it to carry out the task for you instantly.

It's easier to create an Automator script than you might think, too – usually you can just drag and drop elements into the workflow and then hit a button to run it. All it takes is a little experimentation to get you started and you'll be automating tasks in no time.

On these pages we've picked out some of our favourite workflows for you to try yourself; give them a try and then customise them to your needs until you have something you can use every day.

Services
You can use Automator to create Services – once saved, these are added to the right-click menu on your Mac, so you can use them anywhere

Drag and drop
To create your workflow, simply click through the options on the left until you find the one you want, then drag it onto the workflow on the right



Record
You can hit the record button to track key presses and clicks you make. Press stop and save the workflow and it will run the sequence for you

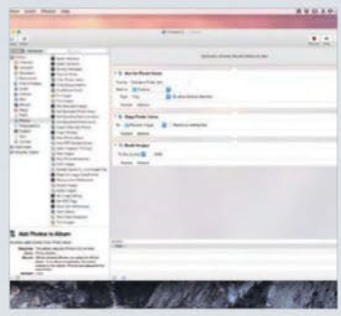
Variables
You can add variables to a Application, Workflow or Folder action and when you run it, you'll be able to enter a variable like text or a title

"Create a quick script and run it to carry out a task"

Batch-resize images

Perfectly sized images in seconds

If you regularly resize batches of images then going through them manually can take an age. With this Automator script, the entire process is taken care of automatically. First, create a new Application in Automator, then drag in Ask for Finder Items, and make sure it 'starts at' Desktop and check Allow Multiple Selection. Then add Copy Finder Items and create a new folder. Finally, add the Scale Images action and choose the desired size. Now you can simply drag and drop images onto the Application to resize them.

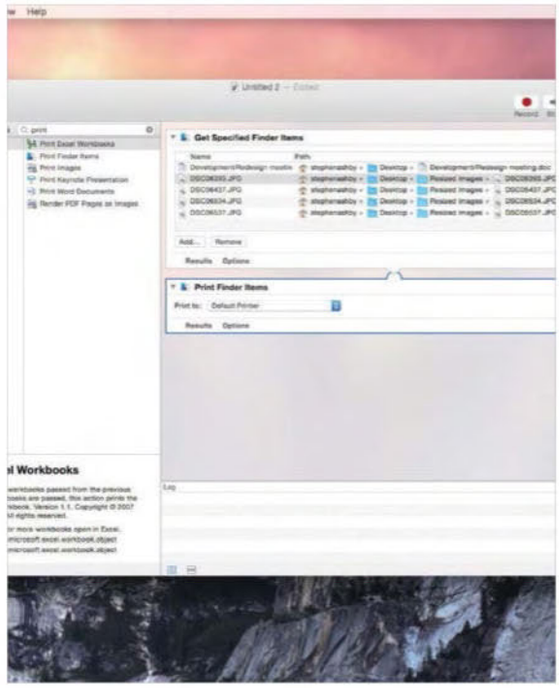


Quickly print multiple documents

Save time opening documents by queuing them quickly

This quick and easy-to-make workflow is perfect to save you some time when you just want to print a lot of documents without going through the process of opening them all and hitting Print manually. To make it, create a new workflow, then choose Get Specified Finder Items and Print Finder Items. When you want to print, simply drag the documents into the workflow one by one, then hit Run in the top right. Automator will do the rest of the work for you, and your documents will print.

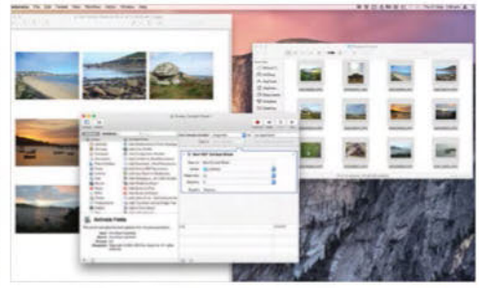
"Save some time when printing"

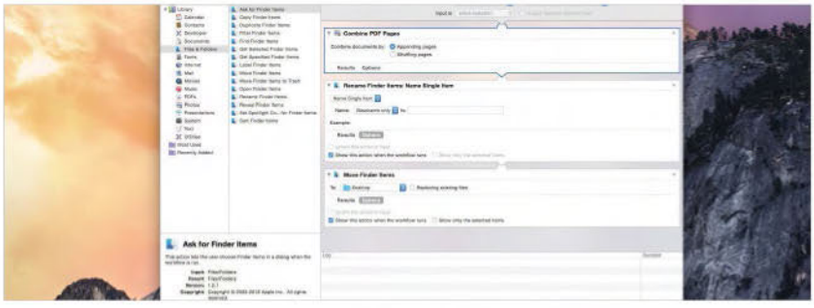


Make a photo contact sheet

Create a contact sheet of photo thumbnails

This useful service can combine multiple photos into a single PDF in Preview, so you can print multiple shots at once. First, open Automator and create a new Service. Add the New PDF Contact Sheet option, and set it up so that it receives image files from the drop-down menu. Set the options up, then hit Save. You can now select multiple images in Finder, right-click and choose the option from the menu.





Combine PDFs

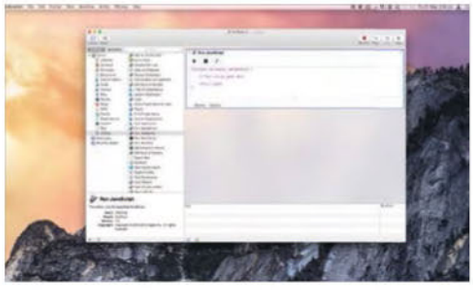
Bring multiple PDF pages into a single document

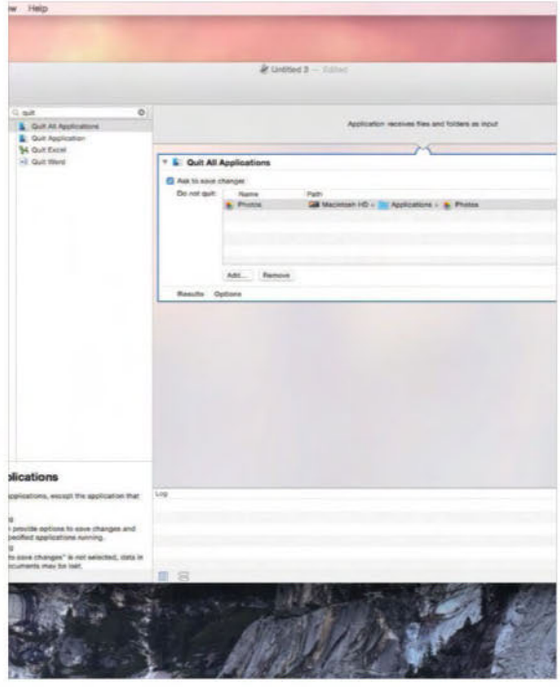
If you have several PDF sheets that you want to combine, this service can do it in seconds. First, create a new Service, then change the variable at the top so it receives selected PDF files. Then, add the Combine PDF Pages option from the left-hand bar, and also include Rename Finder Items. Click the Options button at the bottom and check 'Show this action when the workflow runs'. Finally, add Move Finder Items and check the same box.

Run JavaScript

Use Automator to run scripts on your Mac

AppleScript is an Apple tool that allows you to write JavaScript solutions to common problems, automating various actions on your Mac. It's a highly complex system that requires some serious know-how to operate, but if you want to give it a go you can really create some impressive stuff. The even better news is that you can run these scripts using Automator – just drag the Run JavaScript option into a workflow and have Automator do the work for you!





Quit all applications

Refresh your Mac in seconds by quitting apps

When your Mac is dragging its feet, sometimes you just want to quit every application you are running and start over. Now you can do this with a quick Automator workflow that you can run whenever you need it. You only need to add one command to the workflow – Quit All Applications – but you can select specific apps you don't want to close as well. Once saved as an Application, add the workflow to your Dock for an instant quit button.

"Add the workflow to your Dock for an instant quit button"

Tricks

Take your Mac further with our step-by-step guides

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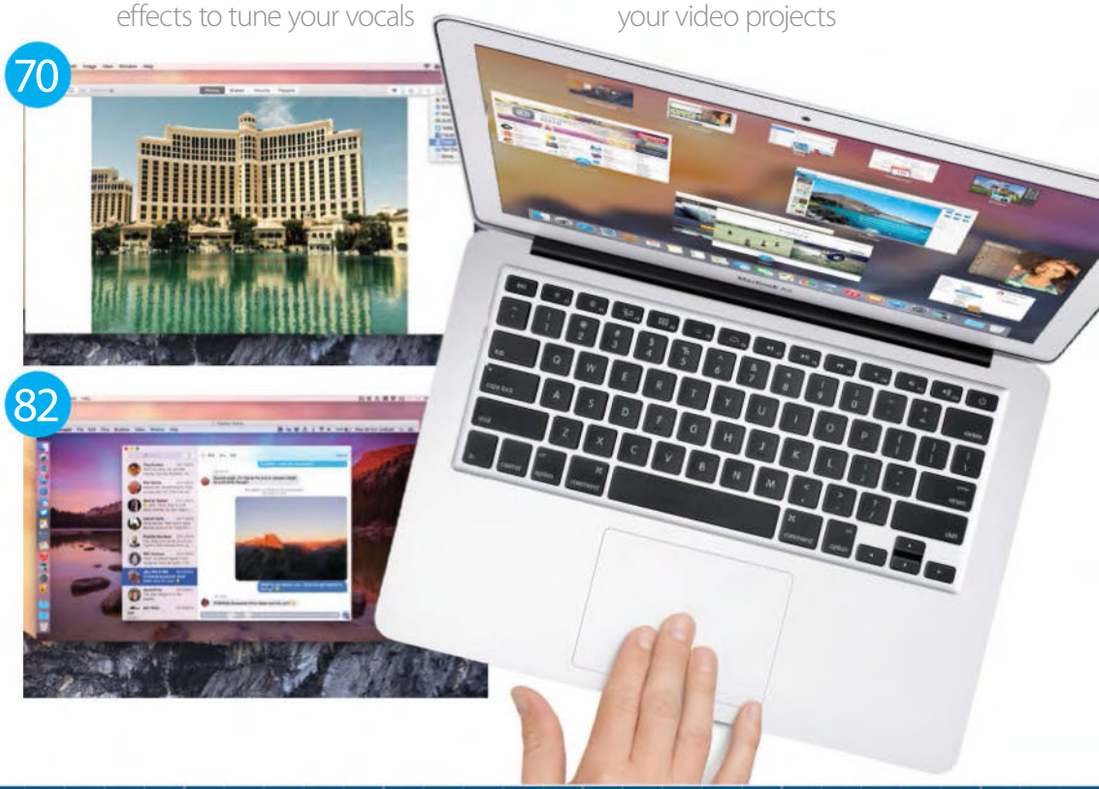

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"Improve your Mac skills by mastering Apple's apps and some advanced OS X techniques"

Years, Collections & Moments
Photos has a new method of organising your photos, again inspired by iOS. Photos displays pictures in the Years, Collections and Moments format, making it easy for you to find the image you're after

Favourites
iPhoto's rating system is no longer, and has been replaced by a new Favourites system as seen in iOS. The heart symbol represents that you have favourited a picture

Projects
There's plenty in Photos to do after you've edited your images. All the usual creative projects are present, while as you'd expect, Photos has an abundance of sharing options built in

Photos masterclass

Everything you need to know about Apple's new image-editing app

Good things come to those who wait, goes the saying. Well over nine months has passed since Apple revealed it was replacing iPhoto and Aperture with a shiny, new, all-singing, all-dancing app called Photos. Taking its cues from the iOS app of the same name, Photos was going to sync seamlessly with iCloud, provide a streamlined home for all your photos and showcase powerful and intuitive editing tools to help you perfect your images ready for sharing. There was plenty to be excited about and numerous questions we were just dying to discover the answers to. Apple has been toying with us ever since its announcement, seemingly delaying its arrival for the sake of it. And then with little fanfare, and part of the OS X 10.10.3 update (check the Mac App Store if you haven't updated yet), Photos went live and iPhoto and Aperture tossed to one side.

Over the next eight pages we're here to show you everything you need to know about Photos. We'll be demystifying new features like iCloud Photo Library, showing you how to import images from various places, master Photos' new editing tools and get creative with the range of projects. If you've got a question, we've got the answer. The wait is finally over; let's get your new Photos app up and running.

Preview
Photos' editing window is dominated by a full-sized preview of the image you have selected, giving you the perfect chance to get your adjustments spot on

Will my iPhoto library work?

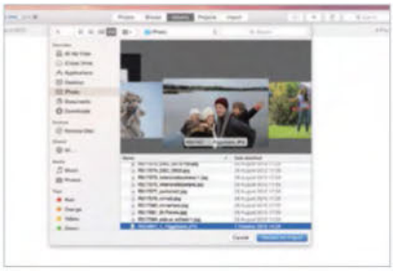
Yes it will. It's a simple case of finding your iPhoto library file in Finder and dragging it into Photos.

Timeline sliders
There's a new way to edit in Photos. With an editing tool selected you'll see these timeline sliders, which give you an instant visual guide to the change that you can make

Non-destructive editing
Just as it was in iPhoto, image editing is totally nondestructive. This means you can be as experimental as you want, safe in the knowledge that you can Revert to Original

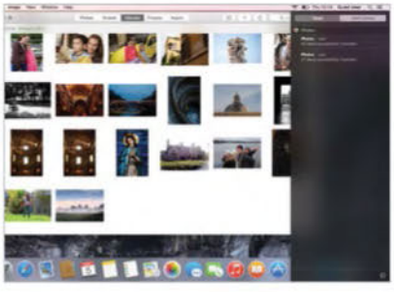
Import your existing images into Photos

The switch from iPhoto and Aperture to Photos should be seamless. Apple has made the process very simple. All you need is a trip to the Import menu, as we show you here. All the data from your old libraries transfers across, including any editing you've done.



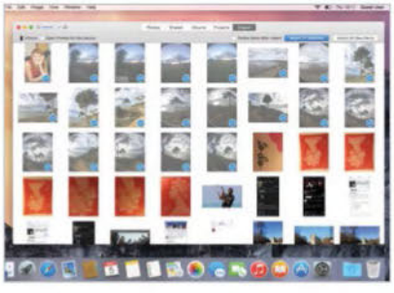
1: Import iPhoto library

Go to Photos' File>Import menu and click the Import Library Option. Photos opens up your user account's Pictures folder in Finder. Select it and drag it to Photos.



2: Check progress

If your library is pretty sizeable, this is going to take a while. You can check the progress from Photos' top toolbar and from OS X's Notification Centre.



3: Import from iPhone

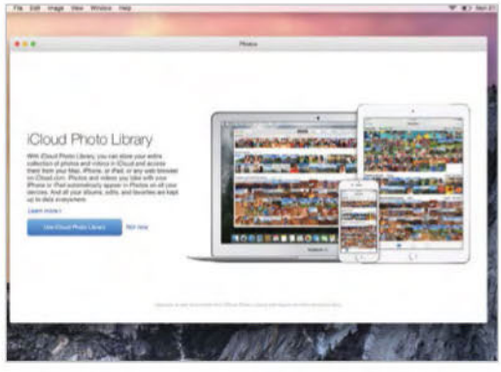
Connect your iPhone (or digital camera) to your Mac and Photos will automatically launch, asking you if you want to import the images. Say yes and away you go.

Set up iCloud Photo Library

Get to grips with Photos' brilliant cloud feature

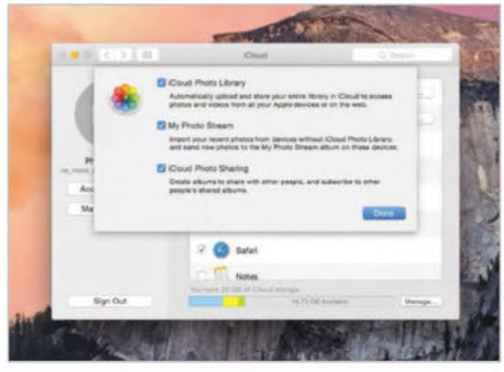
iCloud Photo Library is Photos' biggest and best feature, syncing all your photos across all your devices. Everything you import to Photos and shoot with your iPhone is backed up to iCloud, meaning you have access to your entire library everywhere you go, using whatever device you want. It replaces your Photo Stream, which was limited, but it may come at a price. Only 5GB comes for free, so you may want to check out the boxout across the page for more info.

iCloud | Sync pictures to every device



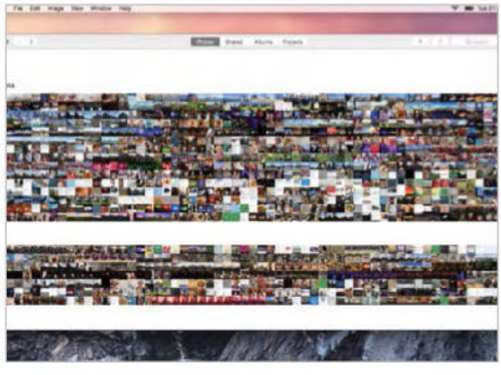
1: iCloud Photo Library

It's the first screen you see when you load Photos, and everything is heavily designed with iCloud in mind. Apple's cloud service is no longer an afterthought.



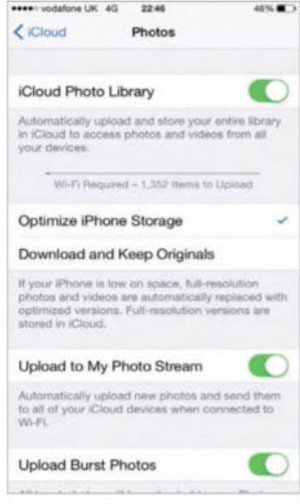
2: System Preferences

You can activate iCloud Photo Library from the screen in step one or head to your iCloud settings in System Preferences and make sure the relevant box is ticked.



3: Your new library

And in a matter of minutes your new iCloud-friendly Photos library is ready to go. If you've used the iOS app, you'll be instantly familiar with the layout.



4: Optimise storage on your phone

If you're worried about using up all the space on your iPhone, then you should head on over to your iCloud Photo settings and ensure that Optimize iPhone Storage is ticked, which will store high-resolution versions in iCloud for you.

Faces
If you've spent hours using iPhoto's face detection technology, you'll be pleased to know that all that information is copied across and ready to use again in Photos

Action menu
This menu should be familiar enough. If you want to start a new album, creative project or print from Photos, select the photos and head to the plus sign

iPhoto Events
Everything you imported into iPhoto was put into events, which you can access in Photos under the My Albums header. They'll be plenty of them here

Albums
All your albums are there too, with the correct title and symbolised by the Key Photo you selected previously in iPhoto. Double-click any to view the contents

Downgrade iCloud account
If you've overestimated just how much storage you're going to need, Apple will let you downgrade via iCloud's System Preferences menu.

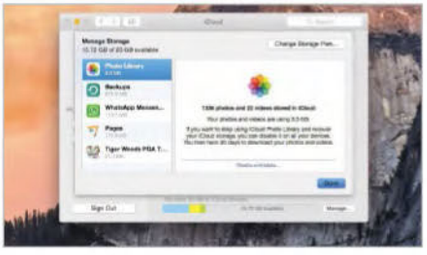
Where has my iPhoto library gone?

When you're finished importing your iPhoto library, you might be a little surprised by Photos' new layout. It's not radically different, but very much inspired by its iOS counterpart. That traditional iPhoto sidebar, the one where you found virtually everything, is no more. All your photos, albums and projects live across four tabs at the top. From these you can access everything from your iPhoto library, including Events, Faces, Keywords, Panoramas and Videos. The only thing missing is iPhoto's rating system, which has been replaced by a favouriting feature in Photos. Check out the annotated screen above for even more information.

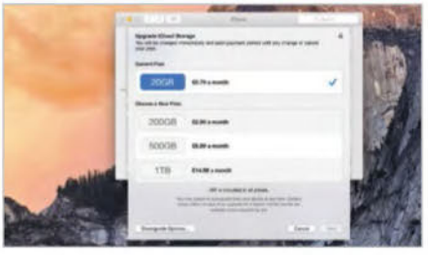
Manage your iCloud storage

iCloud storage is a sensitive subject, especially to those with huge picture libraries. The good news is 5GB is completely free, but even someone with 1,000 photos on their iPhone is going to struggle. Thankfully, Apple's pricing structure is pretty fair, starting at just £0.79/$0.99 a month for 20GB.

"The good news is that 5GB is completely free"



1: iCloud preferences
Head to your Mac's System Preferences and select iCloud. Select Photos and click Manage. You're taken to an overview screen, detailing your exact usage.



2: Change your plan
With that in mind it might be necessary to buy more cloud storage. To do so, hit Change Storage Plan in the top-right and select an appropriate payment option.

Inside Photos' editing menu

Understand your options for getting picture-perfect images

Add
There's plenty of hidden editing tools in Photos. If you hit the Add option you can customise which tools appear. There's a list of advanced tools waiting for you

Zoom
Photos is compatible with all the usual trackpad gestures you'd expect, such as pinch to zoom. You can do it manually in the top-left corner to get up close with your preview

Decimal places
Just because you're moving the sliders doesn't mean you can't make really precise edits. Saturation, Contrast and Cast effects can be tweaked to decimal places

White Balance
Subjects or backgrounds appearing with a pesky blue tint? Photos can fix white balance issues; a real coup for any image editor. Who needs Aperture?

Auto Enhance
The one-stop option for quickly boosting colour and saturation, Auto Enhance is perfect if you're short on time or have no intention of making further tweaks

Is Photos as powerful as Aperture?

Photos is a lot more powerful than iPhoto ever was, but it is lacking in some pro-level tools that Aperture fans will miss.

Remove unwanted elements

You think you've taken the perfect picture. Then you realise that a stray bird has crept into the corner and ruined everything. Or there's been a light leak and your picture has green spots. You may not think of Photos as a complex enough image editor to remove such things, but its Retouch tool in the Adjust menu has the power to hide unwanted artefacts in a soft blur of pixels. Here we'll show you how to do it in three straightforward steps.

1: Select brush size

In the Retouch menu, change the size of the brush you're making the adjustments with. There is a size preview to match against the image.

2: Scrub away

Now you can scrub across unwanted elements. Click and drag with the brush and watch the artefact disappear before your eyes.

3: Confirm

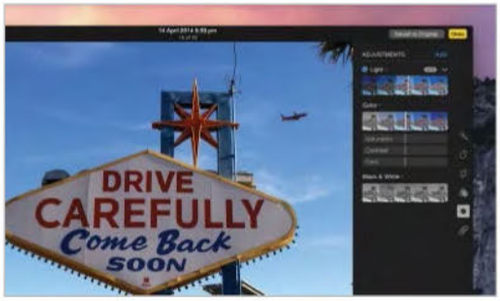
Check you're happy. We found a green light leak, too, so changed the size of the brush and zoomed in close to delete. Press Done.

Make fine adjustments

Tweak the details in your photos to get the perfect results

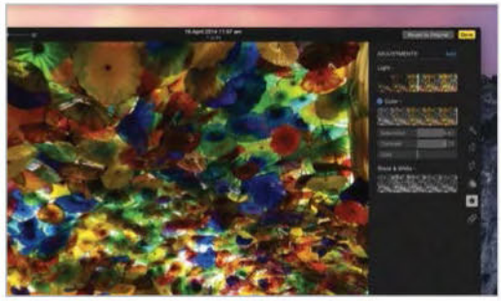
Editing your favourite pictures in Photos is more intuitive than ever thanks to the new timeline sliders that offer precise adjustments and real-time previews. All you need to do is select an image and click Edit in the top-right. In the next four steps we'll walk you through the most common adjustments you can make, showing you just how powerful these tools are.

Photos | Transform your picture



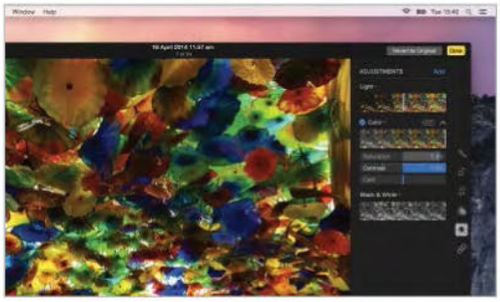
1: Light

Unless you're snapping with a high-end DSLR and appropriate lens, you're not always going to get the lighting right. This is where Photos' Light adjustment tool comes into its own.



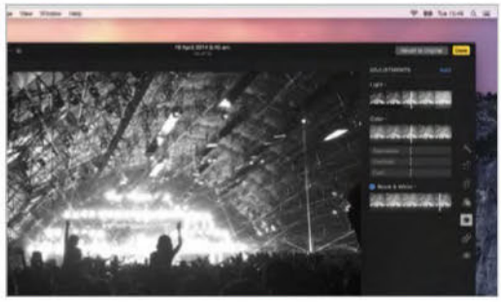
2: Color

If you can't get enough natural light into a shot, colours will appear gloomy and washed out. Open up the offending image in Edit's Adjust menu and move the Color slider right.



3: Precise

You're not just limited to moving the slider left and right, either. When you move the slider, the Saturation, Contrast and Cast menus also change. You can tweak them separately.



4: Black & White

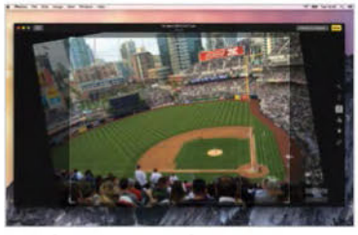
A traditional but nevertheless striking way of making a picture pop is to erase all colour from it. You can play around with the blacks and greys until you get the right balance.

Crop your image

Getting the perfect composition isn't always manageable. When you're pointing and shooting, you're not always using guidelines, meaning images can look wonky. Luckily, Photos has a brilliant Crop tool and a super-powerful Auto button that's well worth a look.

1: Select Crop

Select your image and click on the Crop tool. The image gets loaded up in the preview screen with a compass-style semi circle.

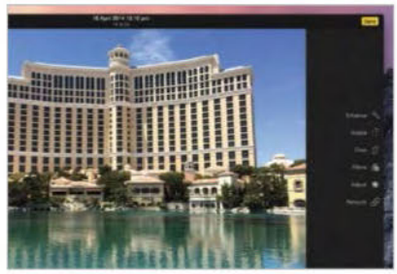


2: Change angle

Click and drag on the compass points until you reach what you think is right. Photos gives you a suggestion via a tiny blue point.

Applying a filter in Photos

While making fine adjustments can be rewarding, sometimes applying a simple filter can be just as impressive. As you'd expect, Photos makes it easy to apply a filter, and you'll be pleased to know the quality is outstanding.

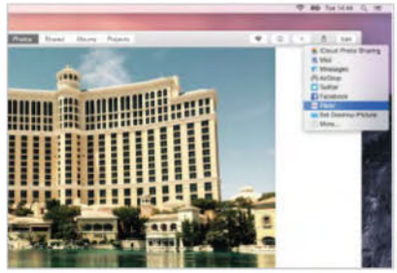


1: Pick and choose

With an image selected, head to the Edit menu. All your editing options are displayed along the right-hand side. Ignore the others for the time being and select the Filters icon, symbolised by three overlapping circles.

2: Select a filter

Now you're taken to the Filter menu and presented with thumbnails of nine choices. They range from black-and-white filters all the way to vintage sun bleached ones. Experiment using the live preview screen.

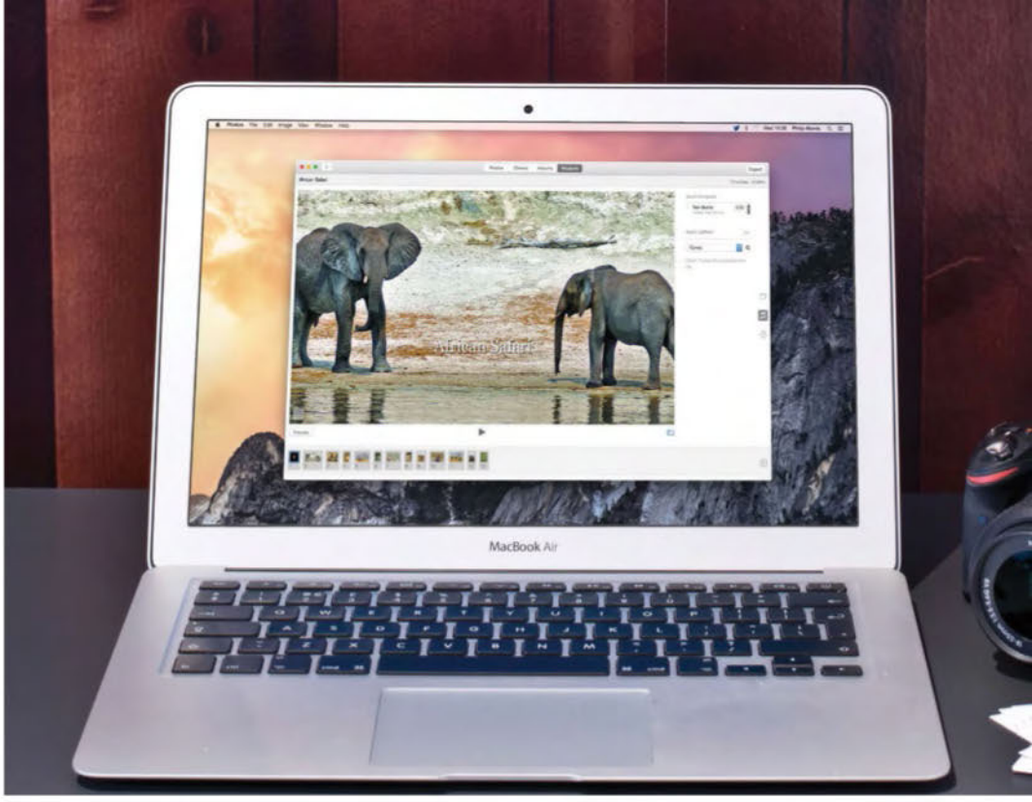


3: Press Done

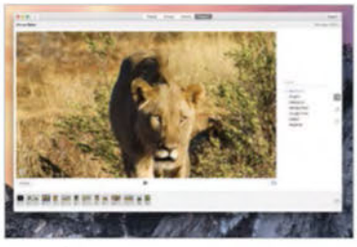
When you're happy with the filter you've laid over your image, hit Done in the top-right corner. You'll see it now back in Photos' library in all its glory. Decided you don't like it? Photos lets you Revert to Original at any time.

Get creative with Photos

Photos' projects let you create something you're proud to share



So we've shown how to import your iPhoto library, set up iCloud Photo Library and edit all your images. But there's no point having all these amazing pictures sitting in Photos gathering digital dust. Photos, just like iPhoto, provides you with a set of creative projects to get your teeth into, ranging from a photo slideshow to creating a photo book, card or calendar. Photos has plenty of built-in templates for you to get inspiration from, but there are a plethora of customisation options too. Let's take a look.



1: Select images

To select multiple images, Cmd+click, head to the plus icon and choose Slideshow. Pick an appropriate theme from the list.

2: Customise

There's plenty to customise, too. With a slide selected, you can change the speed of your slideshow and even pick background music.

3: Export

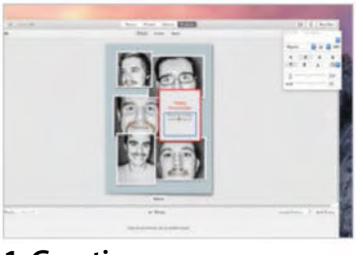
When you're happy with your slideshow, head to the Export tab. Your slideshow will be exported to your Mac and iTunes for showing off.

Create your own slideshow

If you've just come back from your holidays, you're going to have a lot of photos imported into Photos. You've got guests coming round and they're desperate to see the photos. Creating a slideshow is a quick and easy way to put on a show for them; all you need to do is select the images, add some sparkle and press play.

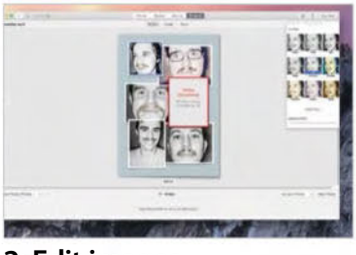
Design a greetings card

It doesn't take much thought and effort to whizz down the supermarket and pick up a card for a special occasion. Designing your own, however, adds a much more personable touch. It's bound to go down well. You can even get Apple to deliver it for you (there are delivery charges) or you can print it yourself for free.



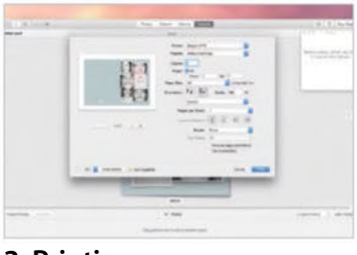
1: Greetings

With your photos imported, select one of Photos' templates and drag-and-drop images from the bottom panel into the placeholders. Add some text.



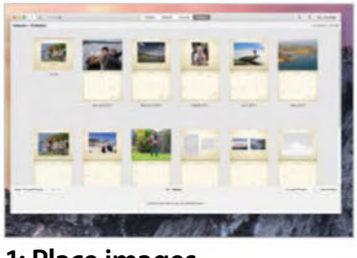
2: Edit images

If you haven't edited the clips before, you get the chance to use one of Photos' nine filters. With an image selected, the option box appears.



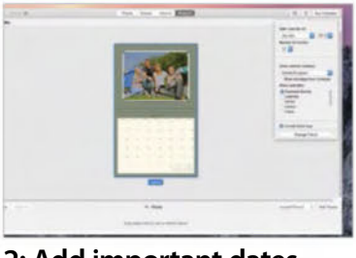
3: Printing

If you've got some good-quality paper you can print the card yourself, instead of relying on Apple. Make sure you choose the right Print settings first.



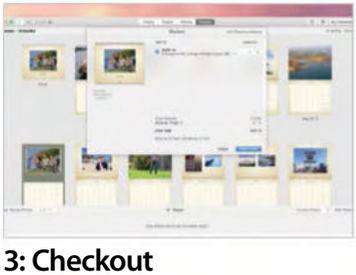
1: Place images

Place your images into the relevant boxes. Once images are in place you can move them. Experiment with different images in different months.



2: Add important dates

You can add extra entries to your calendar, such as Facebook Events and contacts' birthdays, and show national bank holidays.



3: Checkout

For a professional touch you'll want to get a calendar printed and delivered by Apple. Before you check out give your calendar a good proof read.

Turn your photos into a Calendar

This is a project that could take a bit of time. Luckily it's the middle of the year, so you'll be in no rush. Photos gives you plenty of customising options, making it easy to get the look you're after. You can also include plenty of extra information, such as bank holidays and birthdays. Head to the plus sign to get started.

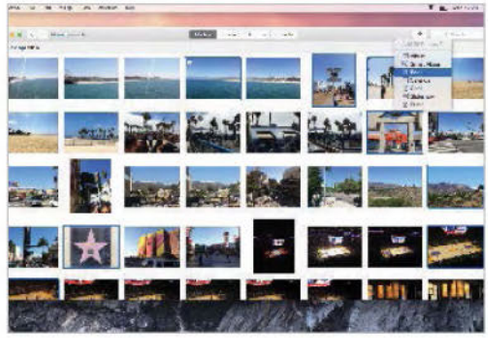
Create your own Photo Book

Build beautiful custom books to give to those you love as the ultimate gift

The ability to build, design and order a stunning Photo Book was one of our favourite features in iPhoto's Create menu. Thankfully Photos contains the exact same option. When you spend a bit of time carefully selecting the right pictures to choose, writing some personal text and customising each page with image filters, the end result can be something to be immensely proud of. If you've been on a special holiday, travelled the world for a year, maybe got married, and wondered what to do with all those treasured pictures you've collected, a Photo Book created in Photos can be a great product to own. It'll sit there on your coffee table as a wonderful reminder of fun times. Obviously, you can create a similar book with an online company, but Photos makes the process really enjoyable, and features fresh new designs and a series of streamlined tools. You can even add full-bleed two-page spreads, and include your own captions, maps and much more.

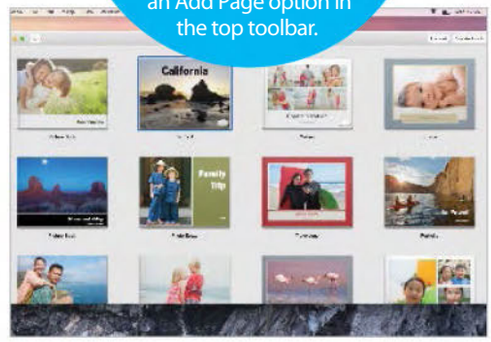
"If you've been on a special holiday, travelled the world or maybe got married, a Photo Book created in Photos can be great to own"

Photos | Design a Photo Book



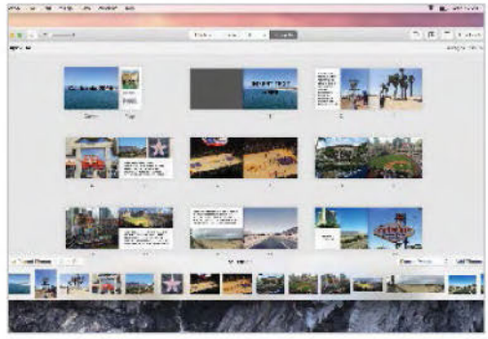
1: Be picky

This is a special gift you're creating so you'll want to be selective with the pictures you're choosing. Trawl through your albums and pick the very best. Go to the + and select Book.



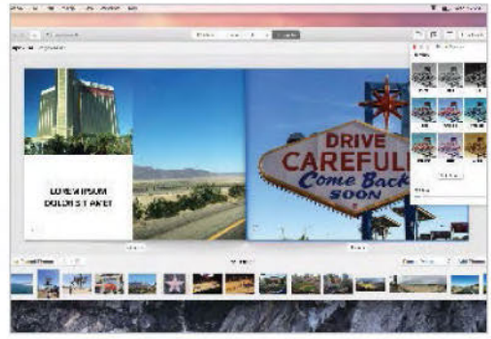
2: Choose theme

Photos will do a lot of the leg work for you. There are a multitude of themes for your book to choose from. Take a look at the preview thumbnails and click Create Book.



3: Lay out

Photos will automatically lay out your book in order of what was imported first. Don't worry though, you can change things around as you wish – this is your book so get tweaking.



4: Tweak away

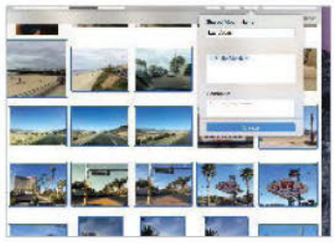
When you're set with the page order, take a look at the individual tweaks you can make to each image in your book. You can even use a filter. Click Buy Book to start checking out.

Can I add pages to my book?

You certainly can. Apple makes building your own book a very personal experience; it's not a rigid process by any stretch of the imagination. There's an Add Page option in the top toolbar.

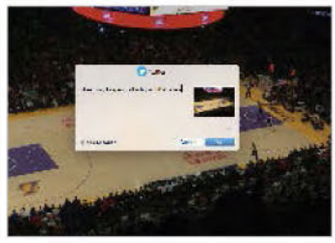
How to share your images from Photos

Photos makes it easier to share your favourite photos. The Share menu lives in Photos' top toolbar, represented by the usual icon, and enables you to share to iCloud Photo Sharing (a Shared Photo Stream replacement) and use AirDrop to share with other Macs. All the usual social networks are there, and you can even customise your share sheet with third-party extensions.



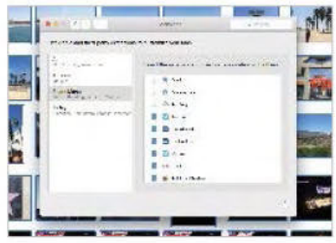
1: iCloud

Shared Photo Streams are no longer, but you can still share albums over the cloud with iCloud Photo Sharing. It works just the same; add a contact and they'll receive a notification to accept.



2: Get social

Your Facebook and Twitter accounts are baked into OS X, so sharing to these social networks is as easy as it gets. There's no need to load a different app; just use the share sheet that appears in Photos.



3: Extensions

Photos supports third-party extensions, giving your sharing options a real boost. From the Share menu, hit the three-dot icon to be taken to System Preferences where you can customise your options.

Discover Safari's top ten extensions

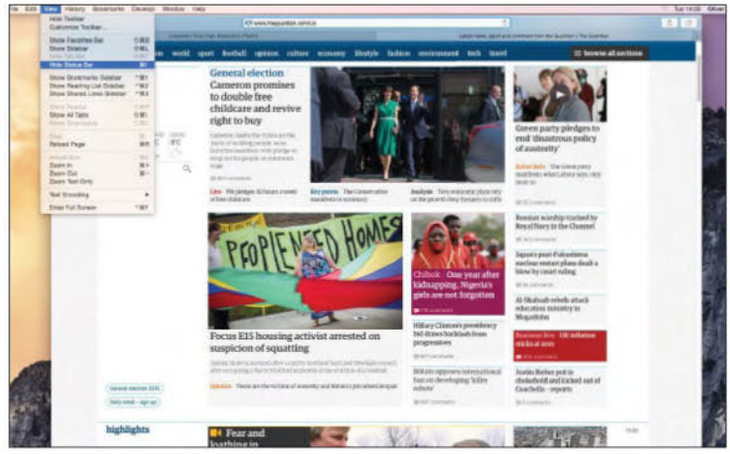
Enhance your browser with add-ons that improve safety and make using the web easier and faster

One of the best features of Safari is the ease with which you can introduce extra features and functions using extensions. These are tiny add-ons that Safari incorporates into the browser to provide extra facilities. There are dozens and they have a wide range of uses. For example, some are designed to increase your security by warning you when websites contain malware; others add extra search facilities or enhance search results to make finding things on the internet easier. There are some that enhance existing browser functions, such as better tab handling or improved status messages. With such a wide range of extensions to choose from, it can be difficult to know which to install. Here are our favourites.

"There are dozens of Safari extensions that have a wide range of uses, from increasing security to adding features"

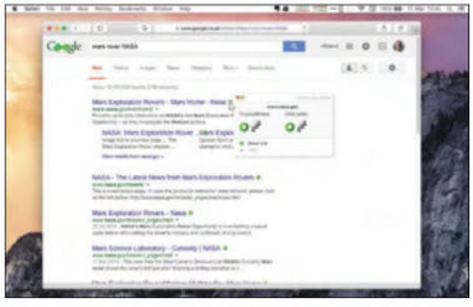
1: Retab

There is next to nothing in this extension; it does one thing and that is reopen recently closed tabs. Press the Command+Z keyboard shortcut and Safari reopens the last tab. Retab extends this and enables you to reopen the last 20 closed tabs. It is simple, but useful.



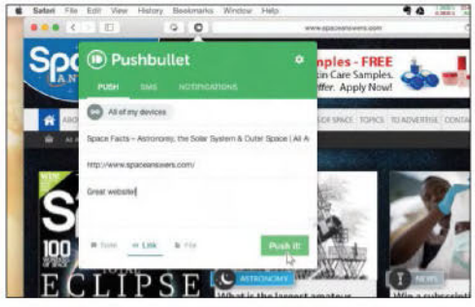
2: Status Bar Lite

The limited screen space on a MacBook means you have to make the most of every pixel. Go to the View menu and hide the status bar to see more of the webpage. This extension shows URLs under the mouse as an overlay in the bottom-left corner.



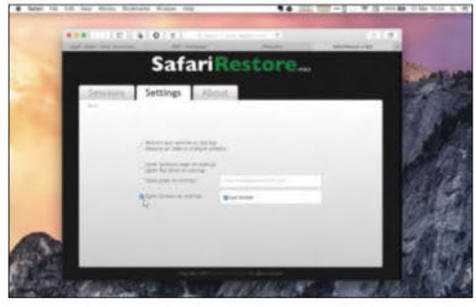
3: Web of Trust

WOT is a brilliant extension that helps you to stay safe on the web. Search results at Google, Bing and Yahoo! have green, orange and red icons that indicate safe, care needed and unsafe websites. Mouse over them to see a pop-up rating box including child friendliness.



4: Pushbullet

See all your phone and tablet notifications on your Mac, enter messages and links and send them to one or all of your devices. You can even send text messages through your phone and push messages to friends. It adds missing functionality for people with Android phones.



5: Safari Restore

Tabs have completely revolutionised web browsing and many people have half a dozen or more open at any one time. Safari Restore saves all your tabs when you quit and reopens them next time so you can carry on browsing. Click the toolbar button to configure it.

Check websites with WOT

Web Of Trust shows which sites are safe and which aren't

Rate a site
This site has already had many ratings, but you will come across some that have not. Rate any new websites you discover so that other users know whether it is safe or not

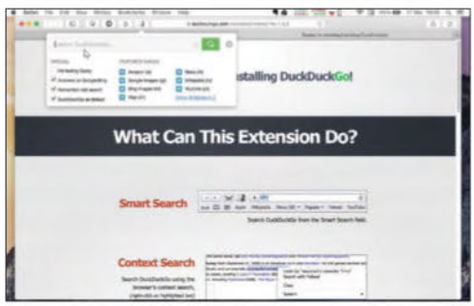
Read reviews
If you're at all unsure of using a particular site, use the comments section to see what other users are saying. It's a great way of checking how legitimate a site really is

View the reputation
Click the WOT button in Safari's toolbar and this panel opens. In the lower-half you can see how other people have rated this site for trustworthiness and child safety

Create an account
These links take you to the WOT website where you can create an account, customise it and so on. WOT shows ratings anyway, but you need an account to rate sites

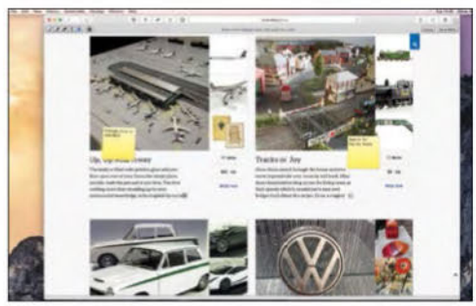
Get rid of ads

Although we haven't featured it in this selection, AdBlock Plus remains one of the better Safari extensions currently available for download. It's especially useful when browsing spam-heavy sites, or to avoid lengthy introductions while watching your favourite YouTube videos.



6: DuckDuckGo

DuckDuckGo can be set as the default search engine in Safari preferences, but this extension adds several more features. Click the toolbar button to see a search box and to view and select common !bangs (site-specific searches). The last search is remembered.

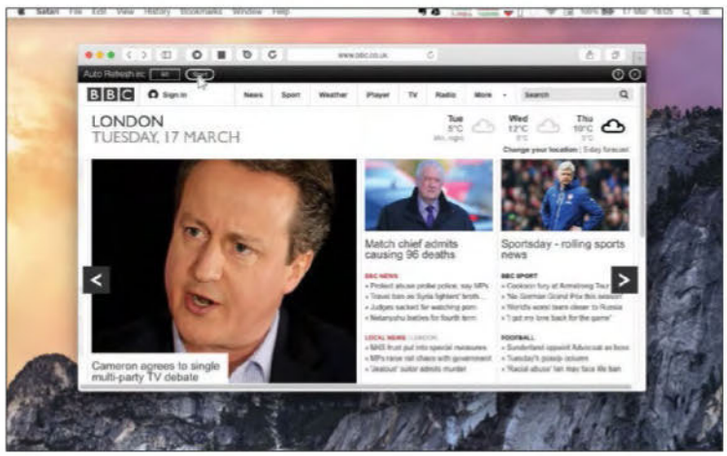


7: Coda Notes

Click the Coda Notes button and an edit bar appears at the top of the browser. This has tools that enable you to draw on the webpage in various colours, add text, highlight sections, and pin notes to the page. Click Send notes to email it to a contact, for example.

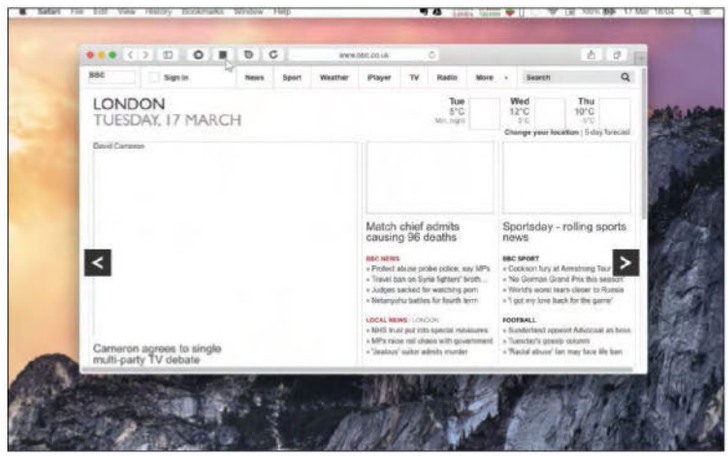
8: SearchPreview

SearchPreview (not to be confused with Search Preview), is a great extension that works with popular search engines like Google and Bing. It displays a thumbnail image of the website next to the search results, which is useful when deciding which link to click.



9: Auto Refresh

Other webpages are frequently updated, such as with news stories, products and prices, stock market information, messages on social networks and so on. Auto Refresh lets you set a timer and automatically refresh the page every time it counts down to zero.



10: Image Block

Some webpages are jammed to the rafters with images, which not only causes the page to load more slowly but are distracting. Image Block adds a button to the toolbar that toggles images on and off. Browse the web with images off and click it when you need to see them.

Inspect HTML on webpages in Safari

View website information using Safari's secret developer tools

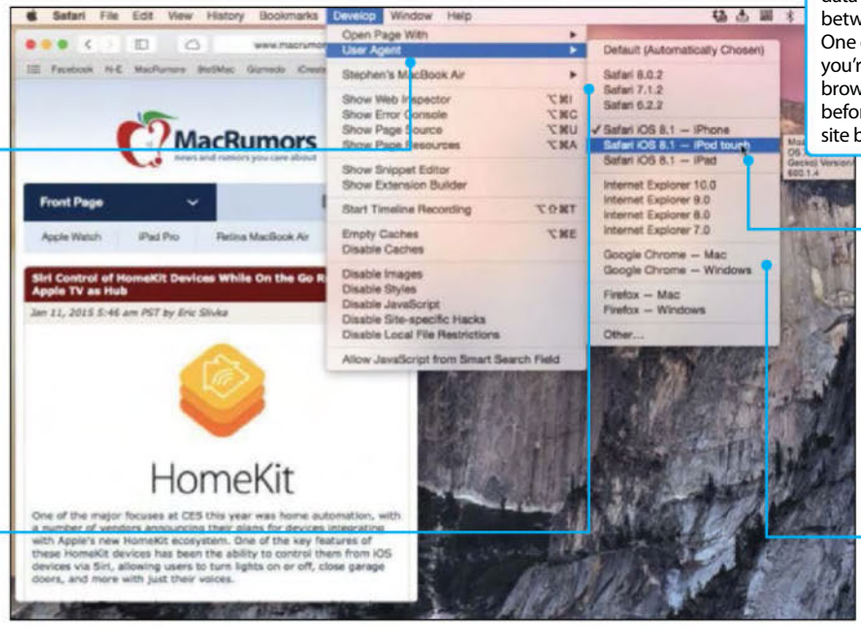
The biggest benefits of using Safari might be its integration with OS X and the speed that websites load up when you're browsing. But it has many more tricks up its sleeve than you might realise. With a few clicks you can add the Develop option to the menu bar, and with it, access many extra functions to the app.

Anyone can enable the options, and once they're active you can view website information, or trick websites into thinking that your browser is running on an iPad or iPhone. You can even choose to disable things on a specific site such as images or JavaScript, or view any errors that have occurred on the page. It's a really handy option to enable, and one that is well worth adding to your toolkit.

"With a few clicks you can add the Develop option to the menu bar"

Inside the Develop menu

Find out what Safari's developer tools can do for you



How does it work?

When you request a webpage, before the data is loaded a lot of info is exchanged between your computer and the website. One of the pieces of info is the browser you're using – if you need a specific browser to view a page, it will know before it's loaded. This system tricks the site by sending some different data.

Get it working

The main benefit to using the Develop menu is that you can make websites work that normally just don't function when using Safari

iOS browsers

If you want to see a mobile version of a website, choose the iOS 8 version of the browser from this menu

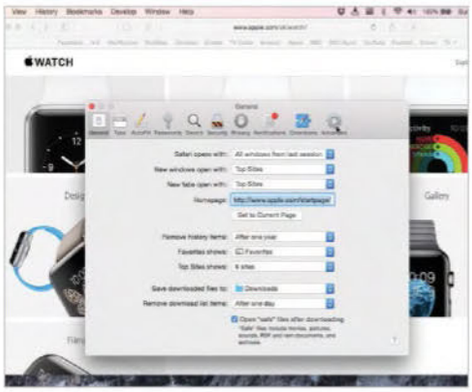
Older Safari versions

Most websites should work with the latest version of Safari, but if you need an older version, you can trick the website like this

Other Mac browsers

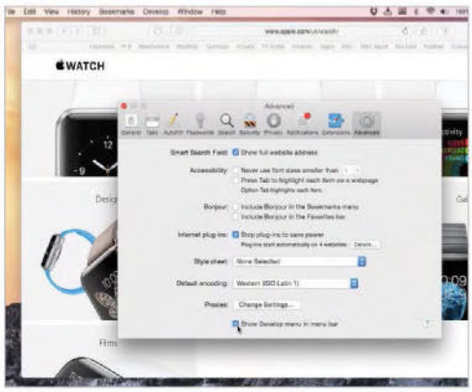
If a webpage 'only works in Chrome', for example, you can make it load by pretending you're using the relevant browser from here

Safari | Use the Develop menu



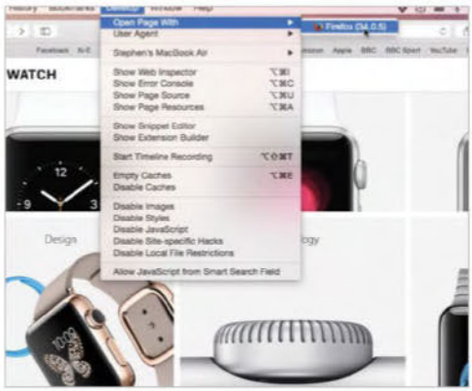
1: Preferences

To enable the option within Safari, first open up the Settings menu by choosing Safari>Preferences in the menu bar, then select the Advanced tab in the new window.



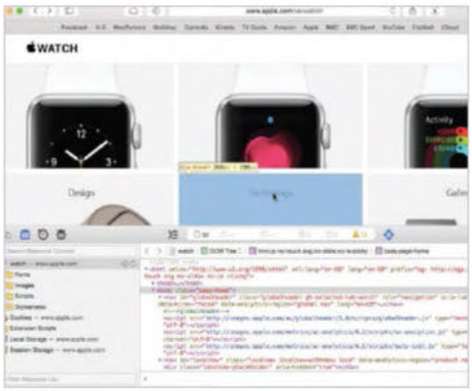
2: Switch it on

At the bottom of the Advanced tab is the option titled 'Show Develop menu in the menu bar'. Check this box and the new option should appear at the top of the screen instantly.



3: Open elsewhere

The first option in the menu gives you the ability to instantly open the page you're viewing with another of the browsers that you have installed on your Mac with just a click.

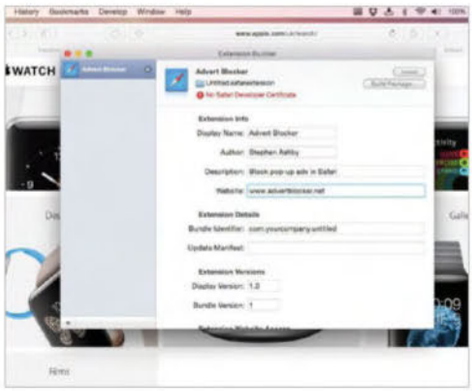


4: Web Inspector

Choose Show Web Inspector and a new menu will appear at the bottom of your screen. You can click Inspect then choose a specific element of the website to inspect.

5: View Source and more

If you want to view the source code of the website you're on, click the View Source option. The menu at the bottom will show the source code of the website you're viewing.



6: Start developing

If you want to start developing web extensions, you can choose the Show Extension Builder option. Just click the '+' icon and start creating a new extension within Safari.

7: Timeline recording

You can also activate the Timeline Recording option here, which will start recording network requests, layout and rendering, and JavaScript. You can click the same option to stop recording.

8: Cache options

Sometimes, you can solve problems that you're having with Safari by clearing the caches of data that the app has saved – and in the Develop menu you can do so with a click.

9: Disable options

The Develop menu gives you the tools to disable specific options on a page, including images, styles and JavaScript – simply click the option you want in the menu to remove it.

Set up Screen Sharing in Messages

Take advantage of the new features in Messages to quickly get in contact with friends

Messages in Yosemite has been given a pretty huge upgrade. Not only can you now link your Messages app on your Mac with your iPhone and use it to send and receive text messages across your devices, it also now enables you to send short audio snippets to friends if you just don't have time to write a message.

But that's not all. In addition to these handy features, you can now also activate Screen Sharing with a friend using Messages in just a few seconds, so you can quickly view their screen and indicate certain areas that they should look at. It's an incredibly handy feature, especially if you're trying to show someone how to do something from across the country. Follow these steps to see how it works.

"You can activate Screen Sharing between friends in Messages in just a few seconds"

Inside the Develop menu

Find out what Safari's developer tools can do for you

Extra options

On your Mac, click View and choose Show Toolbar from the menu to bring up extra controls in the window, including scaling options, access to the other Mac's clipboard and a control option

Connect from anywhere

You don't have to have Screen Sharing enabled through System Preferences to grant access to others – they have to be confirmed every time for full security. You can connect to users anywhere, so whether you're sat across the room or in a different country, only the connection will be affected.

Take control

You can take complete control of the connected Mac's screen – the other user will need to click this icon in the menu bar and select the top option to allow full control

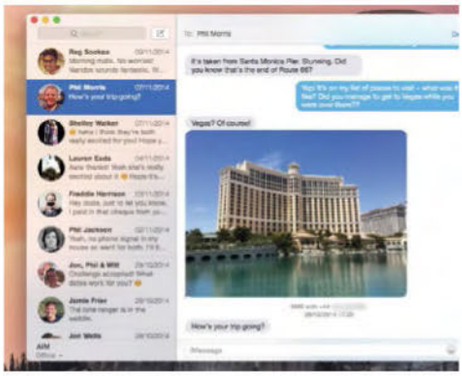
Copying and pasting

You can access the clipboard of a shared Mac, too, so if you need to copy and past text, images or files between the two you can. When controlling, you can drag and drop between screens as well

Quality control

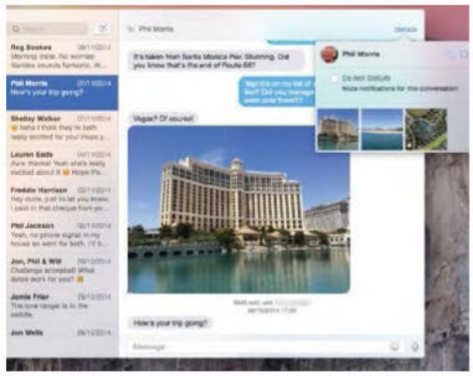
You can change the quality of your view from this top menu. Full quality will use more internet bandwidth, so the connection may not be as smooth, but will make text more readable

Messages | Share your screen



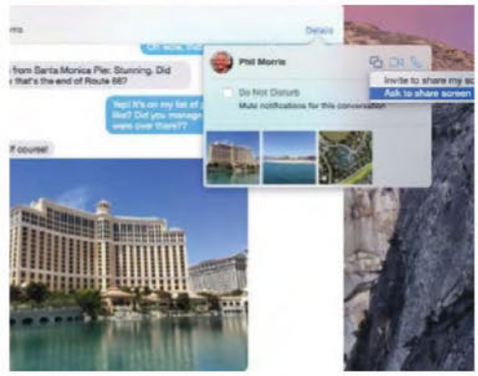
1: Check it's blue

In order to share a screen with someone, they'll need to have set up iMessage on a Mac. If your messages are green, or your friend is using an iOS device, the feature won't work.



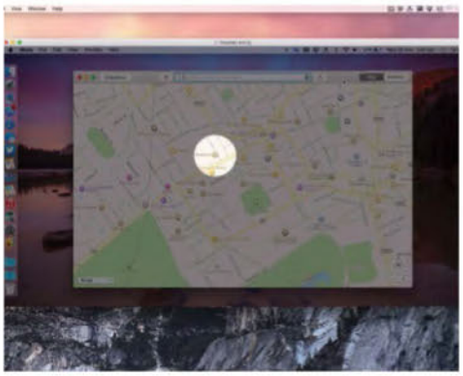
2: Details

To view more information about the conversation, click the Details button in the top-right of the window. Here you'll see contact information, shared images and three icons.



3: Take control

Click the left-most of the icons to open up the Screen Sharing options, then click Ask to Share Screen. When your friend accepts, a new window will pop up showing their screen.

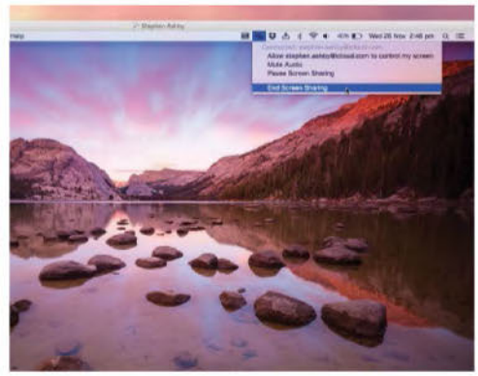


4: Click and show

Your cursor is invisible, but click and hold and a highlight circle will appear to pick things out. The host can click in the menu bar to offer full control over their Mac.

5: Talk them through it

The screen sharing will also automatically open up an audio channel between the two devices, so you can talk your friend through any actions you're taking on their screen.



6: End the session

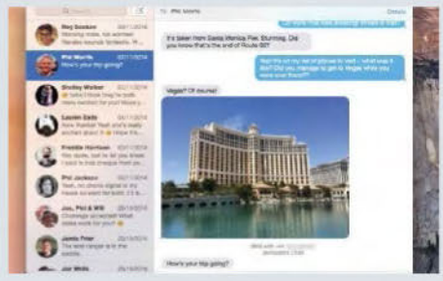
You can end the session at any time by closing the Screen Sharing window, and your friend can end it by clicking the icon in the menu bar and choosing End Screen Sharing.

Send and receive audio messages

Sometimes it's easier to get your point across with your voice

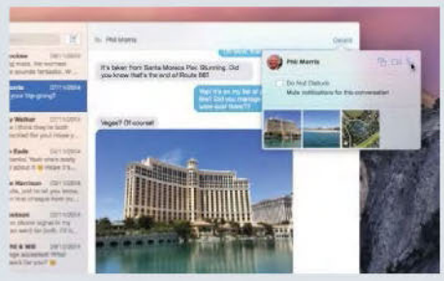
The new audio messages make it quick and simple to send a recording to a friend without having to call. On an iPhone, you can simply raise your phone to your ear to send a message, but on Mac things are even easier – simply click the microphone icon to record a message and send it in seconds. And, if you want to chat properly, you can always make a call directly from Messages.

"Record a message and send it in seconds"



1: Click and record

Click the microphone in the bottom-right corner of the main Messages window to start recording your audio message. Speak concisely and clearly, and click the Stop button when you've finished recording.



2: Send or call

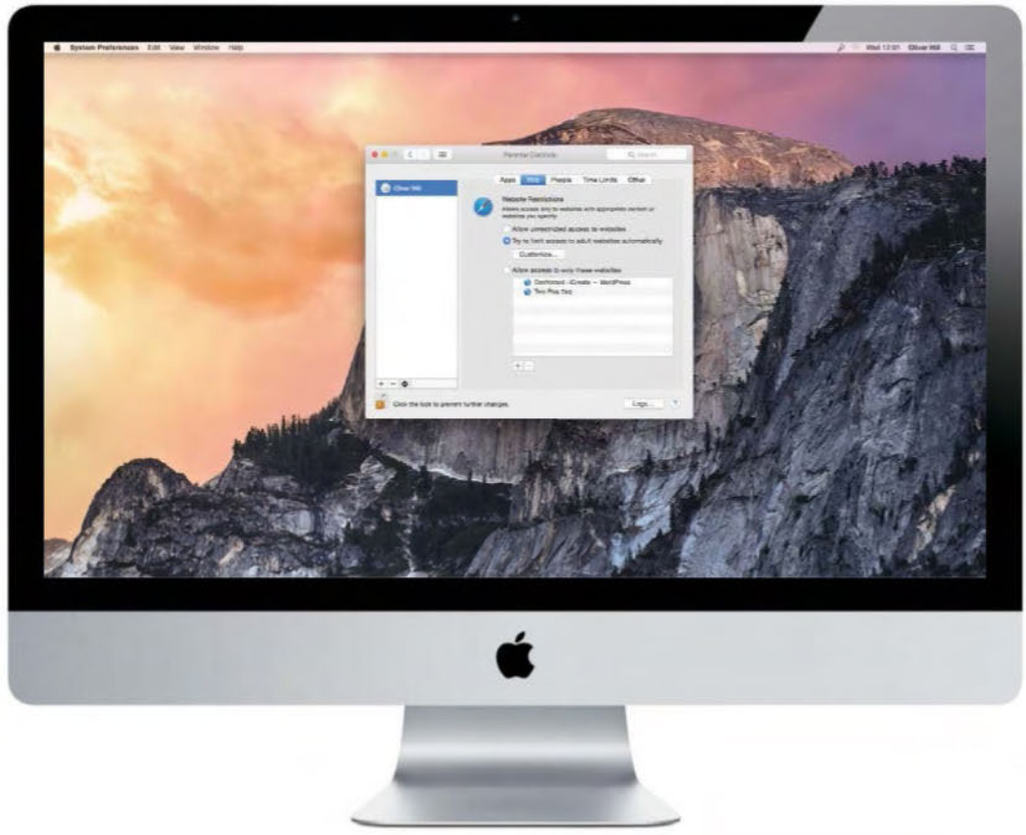
You can either hit the Send button to beam the message directly to your friend, or click Details and then click on the phone icon to make an audio call over FaceTime and speak to them properly in person.

Set up Parental Controls on your Mac

Limit access to apps, websites and much more with OS X's safeguarding feature

There are plenty of things on the internet that you'll want to safeguard your children from seeing. While many third-party apps can offer a full suite of parental control settings for you to use, which usually comes at a price, you can find the same level of functionality built into your Mac.

Apple's selection of Parental Control options can be as restrictive or as loose as you want them to be. There are a variety of options to help prevent access to unscrupulous websites and apps, while there are also additional options to limit contact with designated stored contacts and certain mail restrictions. Use the following steps to get Parental Controls set up on your Mac in a matter of minutes.



"Apple's selection of Parental Control options can be tailored to suit your needs"

Limit Mac features

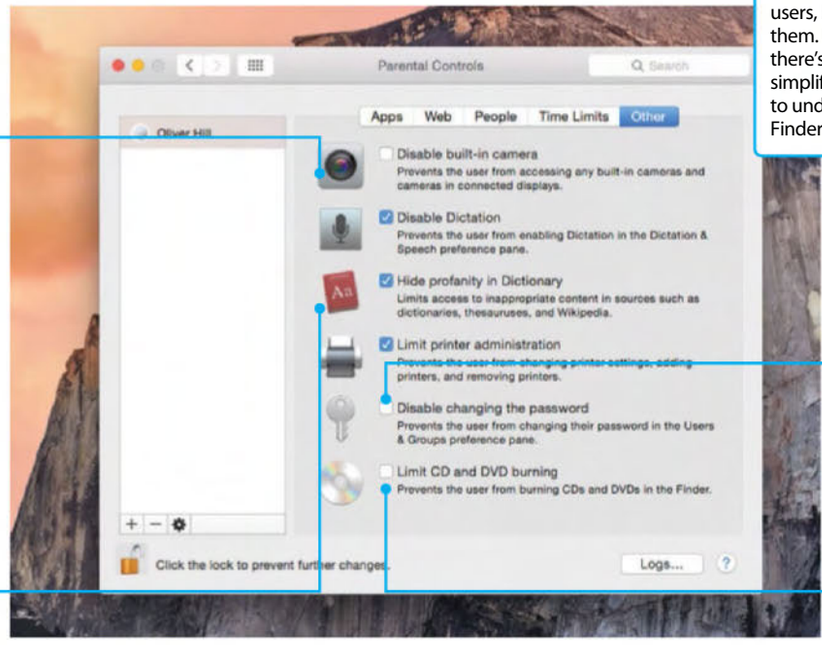
Restrict your children from accessing sensitive features

Use Simple Finder

Finder perhaps isn't best suited for younger users, but Apple does have a solution for them. Under the Apps tab in Parental Controls, there's a Use Simple Finder option that offers a simplified version of Finder that is a little easier to understand and use. However, many of Finder's most common features aren't included.

Disable camera

Apps like FaceTime use the built-in camera on your Mac, but if this is a worry for you, then enable the Disable Built-in Camera option. This will also block any external webcams from working with the account



No password changes

If you've set up a designated account for your children, make sure to enable the Disable Changing the Password option. This will restrict their access to change the password you've set

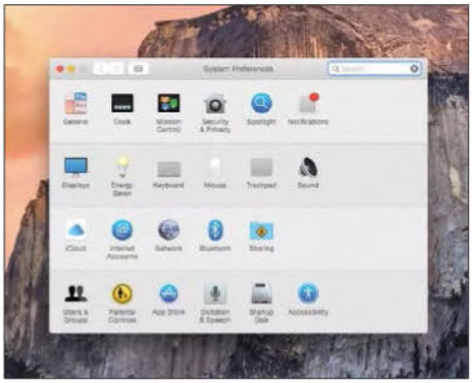
Hide profanity

You can limit your child from seeing any profanity from the dictionary, thesaurus and also Wikipedia by enabling the Hide Profanity in Dictionary option

Prevent DVD burning

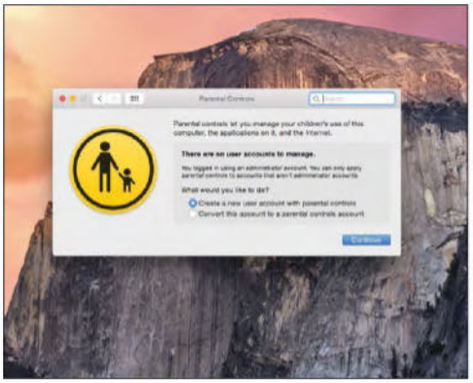
Enable this option to prevent your children from burning both DVDs and CDs through the Finder. However, you may want to block any third-party burning apps to make sure

System Preferences | Set up Parental Controls



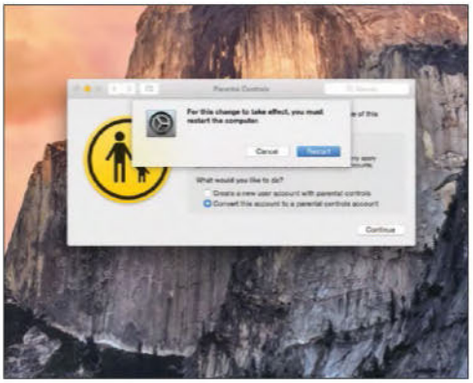
1: System Preferences

Press the Apple icon on the toolbar of your Mac and select System Preferences. Now select the Parental Controls menu that can be found near the bottom of the window.



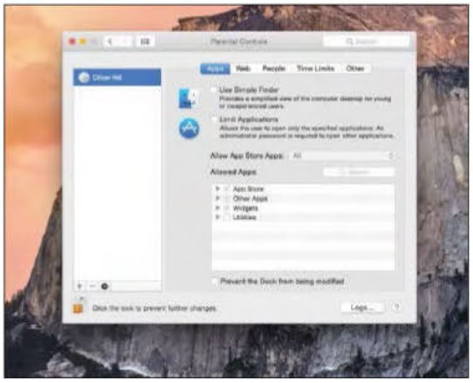
2: Add to account

On the next menu you'll need to choose which account you want to add Parental Controls to. Either add them to the account you're currently using, or create a new one.



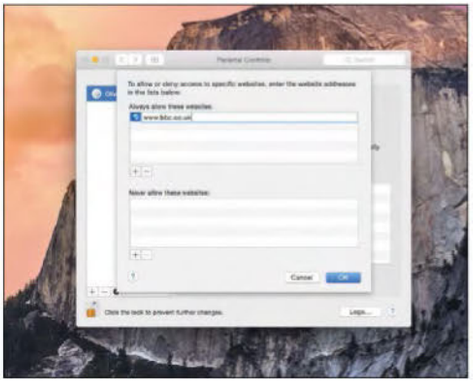
3: Confirm restart

Before you can begin editing Parental Controls you'll need to perform a full restart of your Mac. Make sure any open files are saved correctly before restarting.



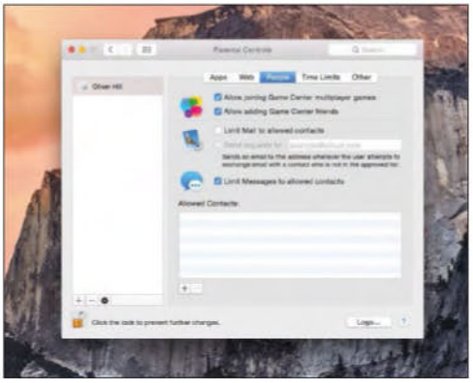
4: Limit apps

You'll now be presented with an overview of restricted apps. Enable the Limit Applications option and go through the list that appears to choose the apps you want.



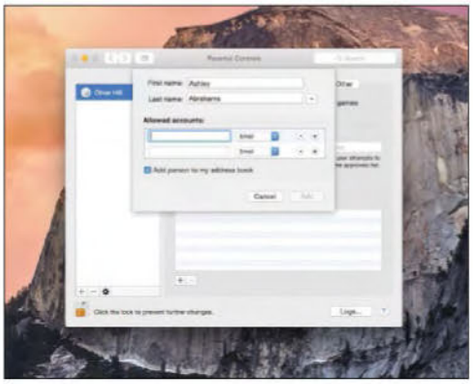
5: Add website details

Press on the Web option and then the Add Website option provided. Here you can set the websites you want to allow or restrict access to by using the + and – icons.



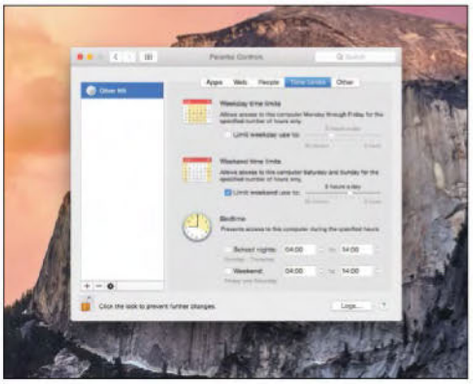
6: People options

Move across to the People tab and enable the Limit Mail option that's provided. This will prevent certain contacts from sending anything through the Mail app.



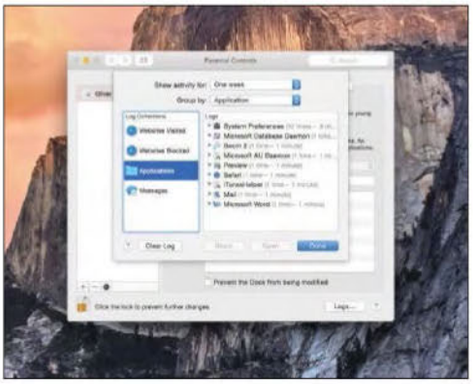
7: Enter contact details

Enter all the details of the contacts you want to be able to send messages to you via Mail and Messages. If it's a new contact, check the Add Person box to finalise it.



8: Set Time Limits

Under the Time Limits tab you can add all the details of when you want to enable access to the Mac. Use the tools listed to set how long the Mac can be used for.



9: Check logs

After all the Parental Controls are set up, you may want to check the Logs option. This will enable you to see the apps, messages and websites that have been accessed.

Choose destination
You can link Pushbullet with multiple devices. Select this option to reveal a list of destinations to which you can send files

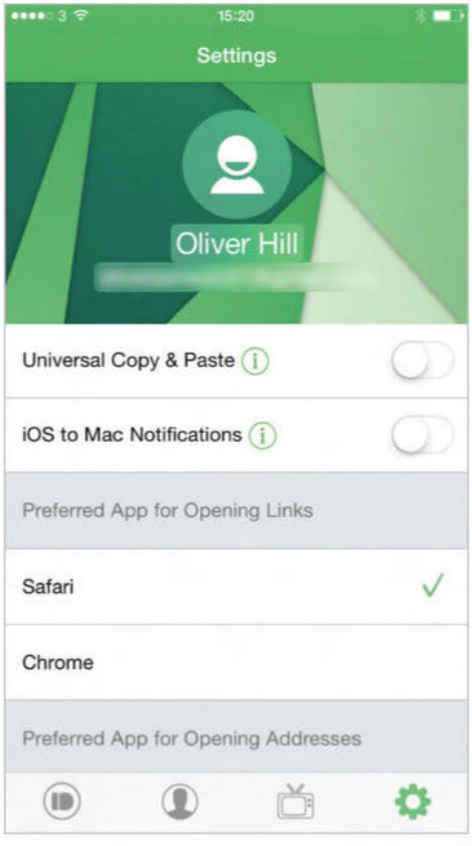
Manage iOS files and notifications on OS X

Pushbullet is a great tool for tracking your iPhone while using your Mac

Having a high number of devices is great for staying connected, but it can be a pain to keep track of them all simultaneously. Instead, the fantastic Pushbullet app can be used to keep track of everything. After setting up the free app on your iPhone and Mac, you can begin receiving certain phone notifications on your desktop. To take it a step further, it's possible to share files between devices. Users can then choose whether to reply with their own message, or simply push it to another contact or a different desktop app. Pushbullet makes sharing easy, and you can see how in the following tutorial.

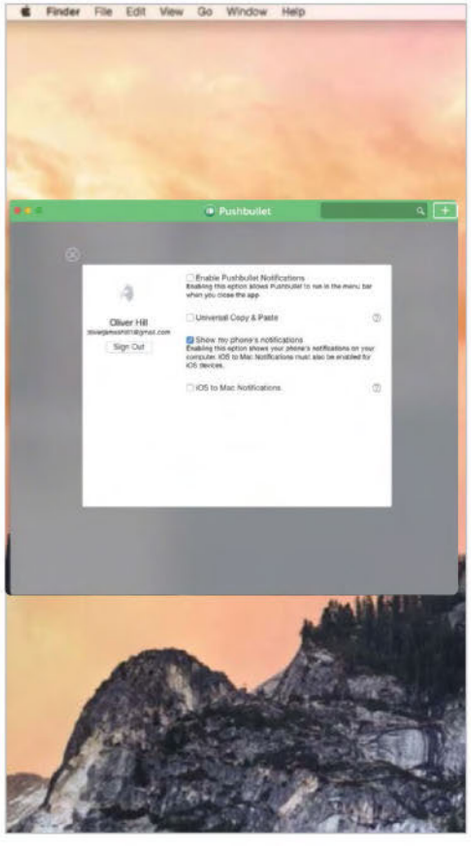
"Easily share files and images"

Pushbullet | Integrate iOS files with OS X



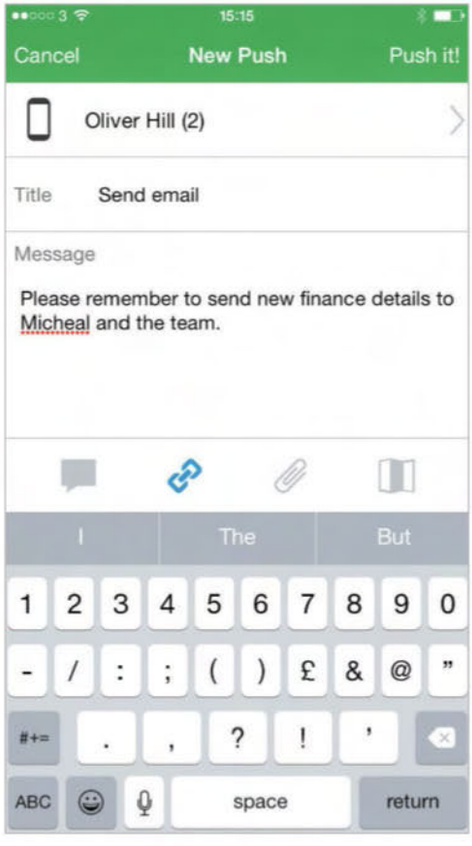
1: Set up apps

Download both the iOS and Mac versions of the app from their respective stores and log in to both of them, making sure to use the same email accounts to sync the apps.



2: Enable notifications

Open up the Mac version of Pushbullet and then press on the gear icon. From here you'll want to enable the iOS to Mac notification option listed on this page.



3: Start pushing

Create a new push from scratch in the iOS app and use the Push It option to send it automatically over to your Mac. A new notification will then appear on your Mac.

Take control of Pushbullet

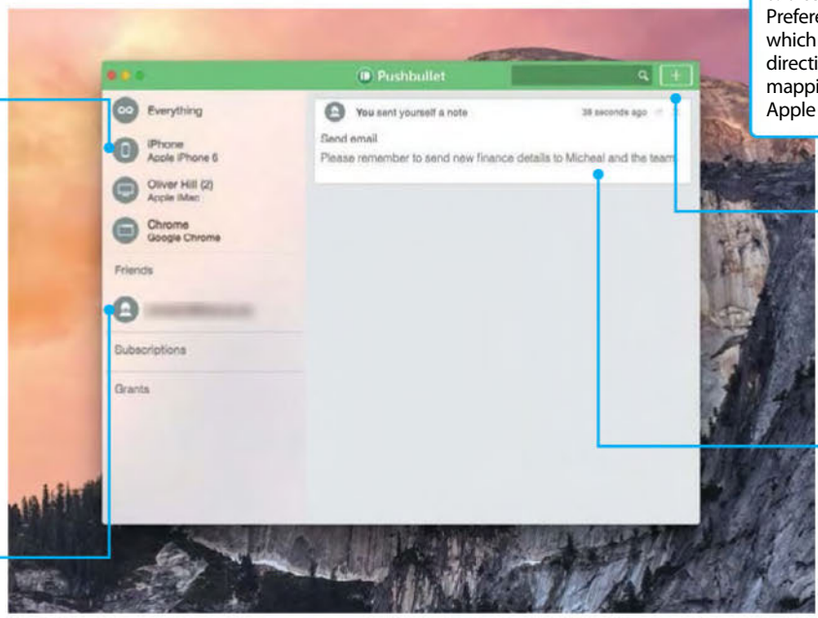
Find your way around this essential syncing app

Manage devices

On the left panel of the app, you can choose to edit the details of the devices that are currently connected to your Pushbullet account

Add friends

Under the Friends tab, you can begin to accumulate some of the people who share things with you through the Pushbullet app



Opening addresses

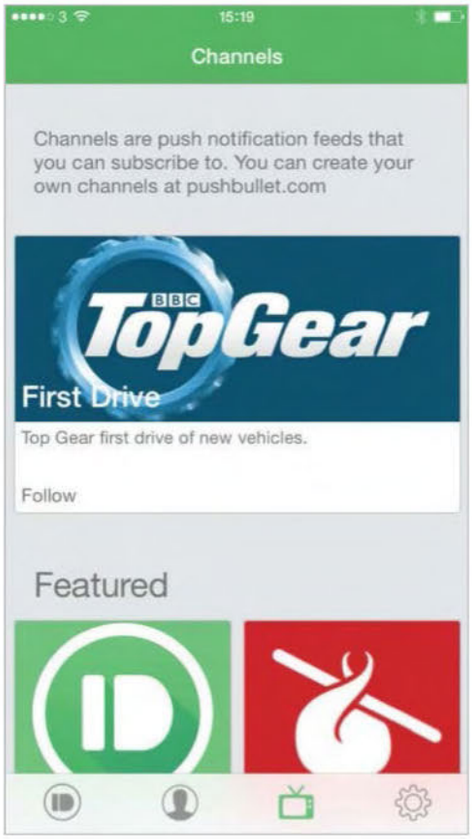
If a notification is based around directions to a certain place, pay a visit to the Preferences menu within the app to choose which third-party app you'd like these directions to open in. Currently, the best mapping apps to choose from would be Apple Maps, Google Maps or even Waze.

Create a new one

To start a new push from scratch, press the + icon on the top-right corner of the app. A new blank push will then appear

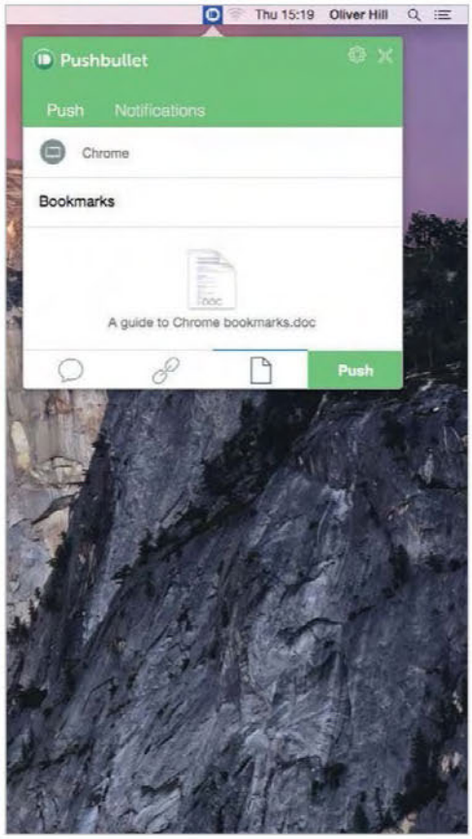
Track notifications

The right side of the app will be filled with the notifications you've most recently received. Press the X button to delete one from the list



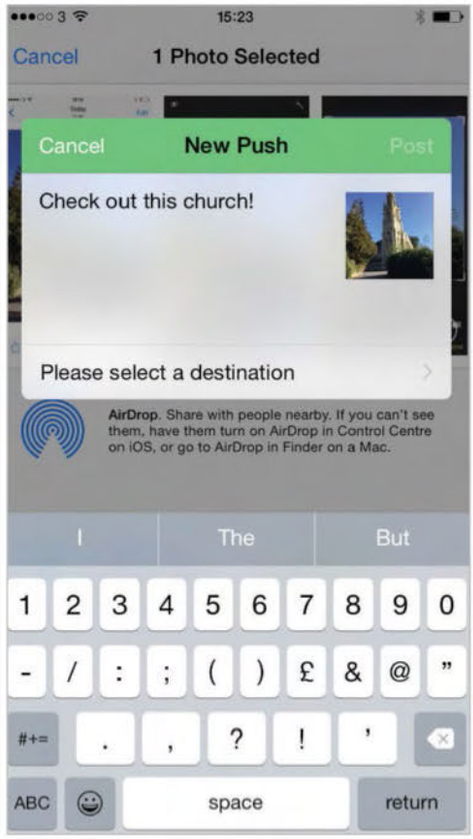
4: Manage notifications

After establishing a connection, more of your iOS notifications automatically appear on your Mac. Use the iOS app to manage the notifications that you want to be shared.



5: Syncing files

While creating a push, use the Attach option for a quick and simple way to transfer files and photos between devices without any need for any complicated software.



6: Photos extension

Pushbullet is also an official extension within the Photos app. After snapping a photo, you can use the Pushbullet option to instantly send it across to your Mac.

Wirelessly share media with AirParrot 2

Mirror what's on your Mac's display to your TV via your Apple TV or Chromecast device

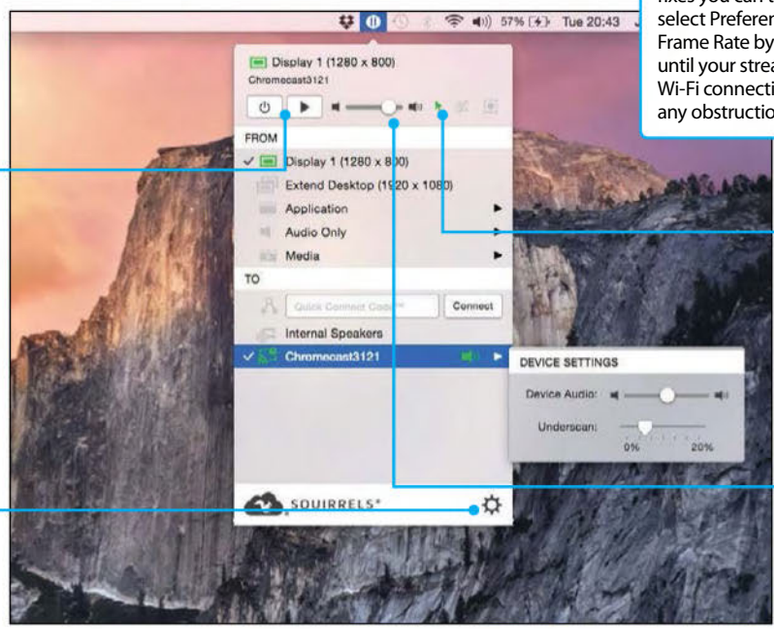
If you've got an old Mac that isn't compatible with AirPlay but want to reap the benefits of mirroring your display to your TV, don't throw your Mac away just yet – take a look at AirParrot 2. This bit of software enables you to mirror your Mac's display to your TV via devices such as Apple TV – or if you prefer to use something more cost-effective – the Google Chromecast device.

It also streams audio directly from your Mac to your TV or speakers with wireless capabilities around your house. Perfect if you're entertaining guests! AirParrot 2 also enables simultaneous mirroring to multiple devices, which means that you can stream a video or some music to multiple screens around your house. Let's take a look at how you can get started.

"This bit of software enables you to mirror your Mac's display to your TV"

Make the most of AirParrot 2

Get to grips with AirParrot 2's interface



Stop mirroring/play/pause
To pause streaming temporarily, or to stop it altogether, use the Switch and Play/Pause icons. Clicking the Switch icon will completely stop all streaming, while the Play/Pause icon will temporarily pause and resume any streaming

Access settings
Set up and access preferences for AirParrot 2 such as adjusting streaming quality and frame rate, check for the latest updates and get help and support for AirParrot 2 by clicking the cog

Fixing any lag or quality issues
Experiencing lag with AirParrot 2? There are a few fixes you can try. Click the cog in AirParrot and then select Preferences. Reduce the Video Quality and Frame Rate by dragging the relevant sliders to the left until your stream becomes stable. AirParrot uses your Wi-Fi connection, so make sure your router is free of any obstructions.

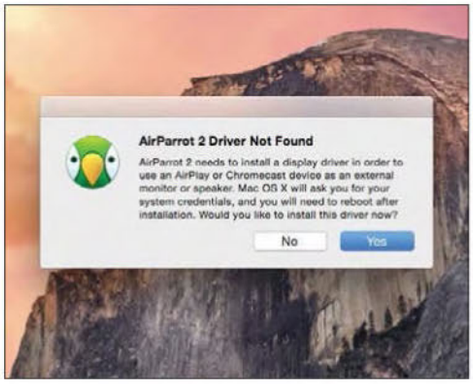
Show/Hide cursor
The mouse cursor is pretty annoying – especially if you're trying to stream or look at photos. Clicking on the mouse cursor icon will hide the cursor on the TV that you're streaming to

Control master volume
TV volume too loud or too quiet? Control the audio being streamed to your TV via AirParrot 2 using the volume slider so you don't deafen yourself and everyone around you

AirParrot 2 | Wirelessly mirror your Mac's display

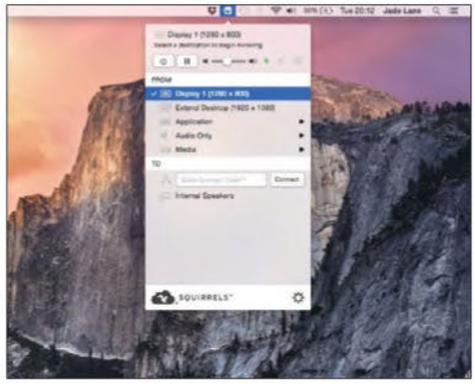
1: Download AirParrot 2

Head to www.airsquirrels.com/airparrot and purchase a license (£9.99/$14.99) for AirParrot 2. Once downloaded, install it. AirParrot can be found in your Applications folder.



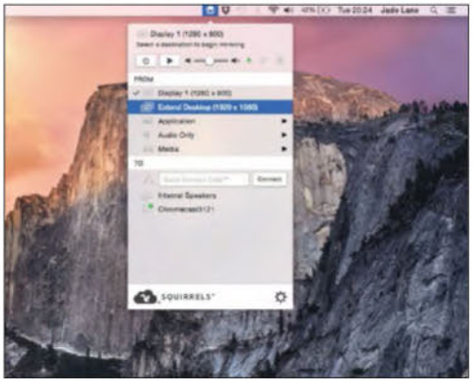
2: Install display drivers

When launching for the first time, you may be asked to install a display driver: this will help AirParrot 2 run correctly. Click on Install Display Driver. You'll then need to reboot your Mac.



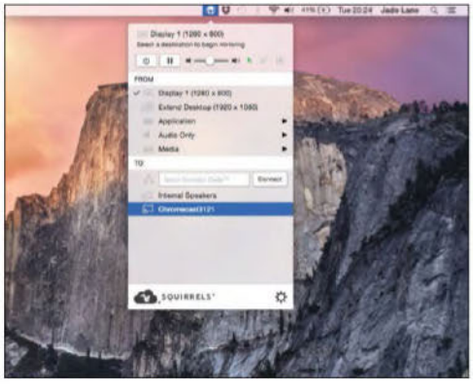
3: Choose your mirror

Getting started with streaming is easy. Click on a display you want to stream from (more than one display shows if you've got multiple displays connected to your Mac).



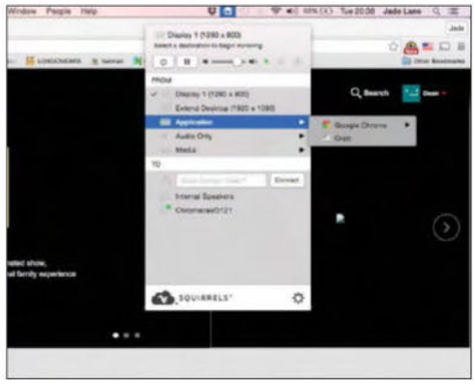
4: Which display?

If you've got multiple displays connected to stream from and you're not sure which display is which, hover your mouse over the display in the list and it will be outlined in green.



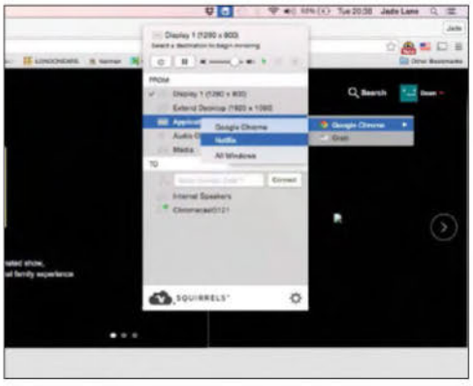
5: Choose your destination

Next, you need to choose where you want to stream your display to. Under the To heading, click on the device that you wish to stream to, ie Apple TV or Chromecast.



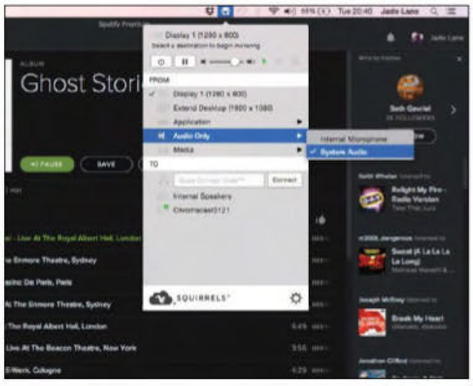
6: Stream your browser

If you want to only the stream the contents of one app such as Netflix or Spotify via an internet browser to your TV, click on Applications and select the app from the pop-out menu.



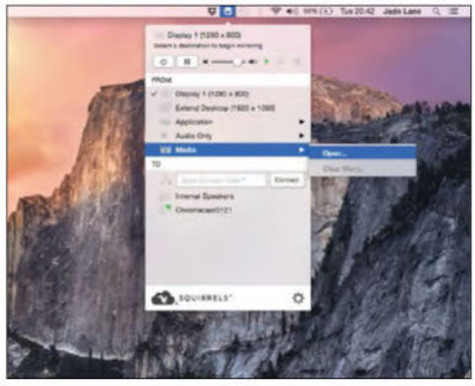
7: Choose your tab

If you want to stream from an internet browser and have multiple windows or tabs open in that app, you can select which window or tab you want to stream wirelessly to your TV.



8: Stream your audio

Alternatively, if you've got guests, you can easily stream music from your Mac to your TV to keep them entertained. Click Audio Only and choose which audio channel is to be mirrored.



9: Stream only media

Lastly, you can choose to stream a media file, such as a movie, to your TV. Select Media and click Open to find the file that you want to launch and stream to your TV.

Customise your own drum machine

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

Discover how to mute, solo, reorder, replace and change the sound of your kit pieces

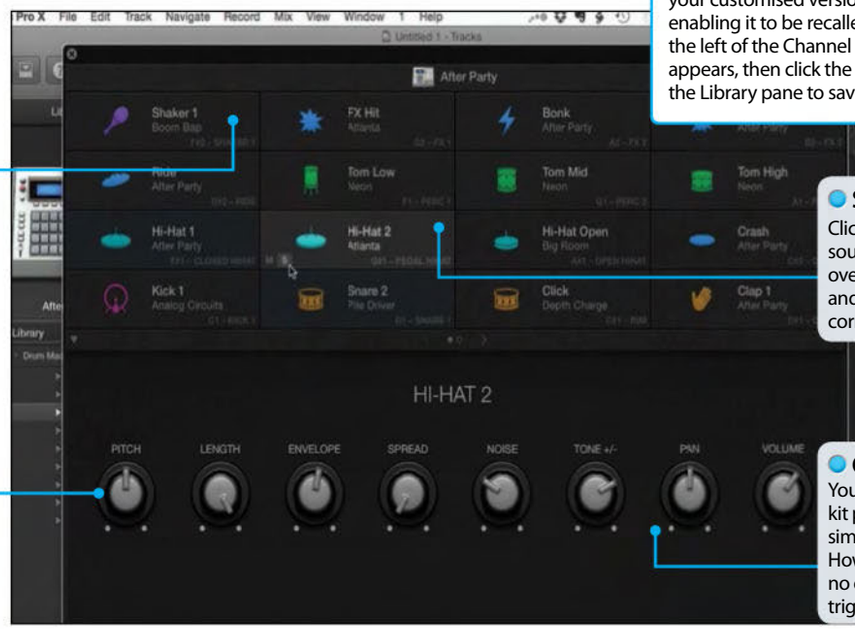
Logic Pro X's 10.1 update delivered a handful of nifty new features, one of which was Drum Machine Designer. In part a swanky new front end for the existing Ultrabeat drum sequencer plug-in, all of the legacy Ultrabeat sounds are available for use in the new plug-in, as well as a host of cool new sounds, many based on current sub-genres of the EDM scene such as trap, dubstep etc.

The interface features a grid of cells, each containing one drum sound or 'kit piece'. You can mute, solo, reorder, replace and change the sound of each individual kit piece, so to find out how to load up, customise and save your own preset drum kits, simply follow the steps here.

> "You can mute, solo, record, replace and change the sound of each individual kit piece"

Jump to the beat

Get your groove on with Drum Machine Designer



Deselect cells

Click the plug-in header area to deselect all cells and reset the Library display to the Drum Machine Designer preset list and the Smart Controls panel to the Global Kit controls

Saving kits

Once you've finished editing your kit, you can save your customised version as a new library patch, enabling it to be recalled in future projects. Click to the left of the Channel Strip slot so that a blue triangle appears, then click the Save button at the bottom of the Library pane to save your kit as a user patch.

Solo and Mute

Click each cell to check out the sound within it. Hover your cursor over a cell to reveal hidden mute and solo buttons in the lower-left corner – M for mute, S for solo

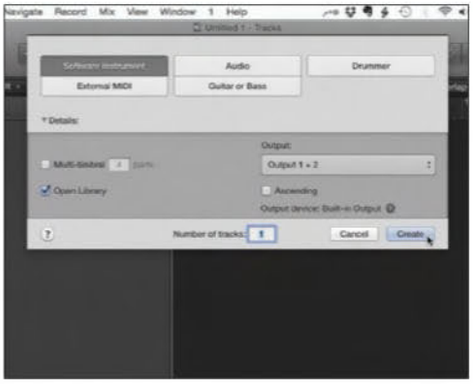
Tune!

The Pitch control that adjusts the tuning of each kit piece is usefully marked out in note pitches, making it a breeze to tune individual drums to your track

Order, order

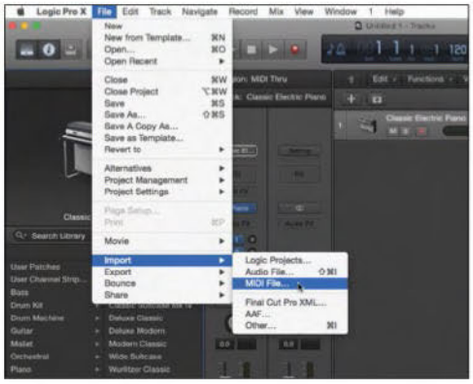
You can change the order in which kit pieces appear in the grid by simply dragging them around. However, be aware that this has no effect on the MIDI note that triggers them

Logic Pro X | Customise Drum Machine Designer kits



1: Create project

In Logic, go to File>New and then tick the Open Library box in the New Track dialog. Click Create to make a new project with a blank software instrument track.



2: Import MIDI file

Go to File>Import>MIDI File and then load the provided MIDI file 'DM Designer.mid' into the project. Hit the 'C' key to enable the cycle range from bars 1-5.

3: Load plug-in

Select the Grand Piano track. In the Library pane, choose Drum Machine>Drum Machine Designer>After Party from the preset list. Once you've done that, hit Play.

4: Full disclosure

Click the Drum Machine Designer's instrument slot in the channel strip in order to open its front panel. Click the disclosure triangle to reveal the drop-down Smart Controls.

5: Kit effects

The Smart Controls show mix and effects settings that affect the whole kit. Adjust the level of kit piece groups in the Mix area, and add global effects in the Effects area.

6: Edit kit pieces

Click on a cell and the Smart Controls will now pertain to the selected kit piece. We can add more body to the snare by cranking up the Body knob, for example.

7: Swap and change

To replace individual kit pieces, click to highlight the sound that you want to swap out (the snare in this case). The Library should now be displaying a list of available alternatives.

8: Load up

Click on a sound of your choice in the Library list in order to load it up into the snare cell in place of the original sound file. Here, we've chosen Snare 2 Pile Driver.

9: Flip through

Simply continue using the up and down arrow keys on your keyboard in order to navigate through the list as the track plays. Keep doing this until you've built a kit you like.

Auto tune vocal performances

Make the vocals in your GarageBand songs pitch-perfect with the Auto Tuning tool

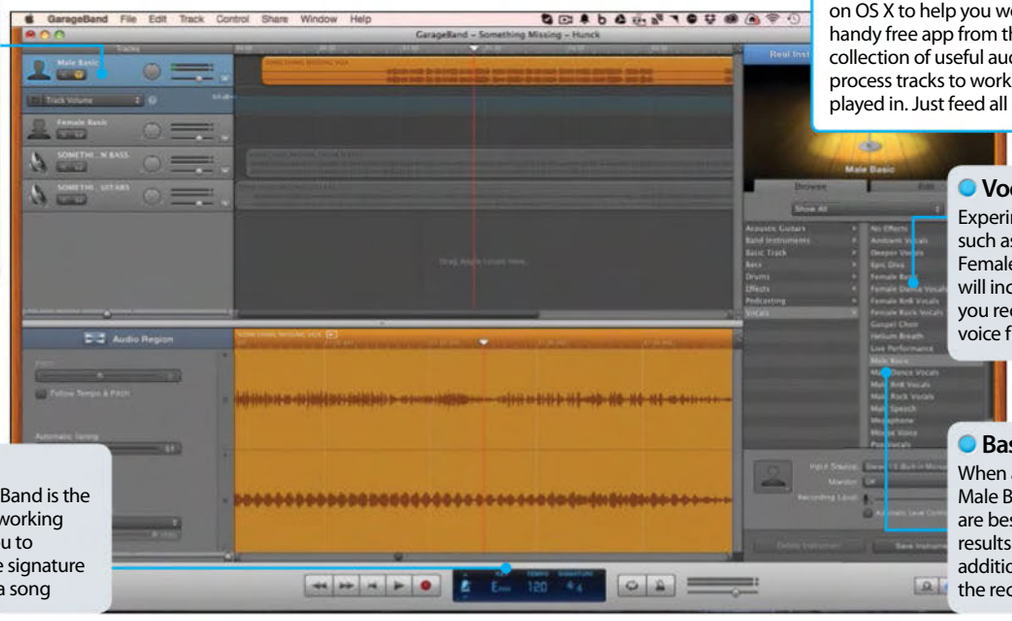
Auto tuning has become a widely-used tool not just in homemade music production but within the entirety of the music industry itself. Auto tuning enables you to rework a piece of recorded vocals and improve the pitch of the individual notes throughout the track. GarageBand will analyse a vocal recording and register the key in which each note is sung throughout the recording.

The tool will then compare each respective note with that of the key that the instrumental section of the song is being performed in. GarageBand will then shift the notes of the vocals to correspond, putting the vocals in perfect key. That may sound complicated but GarageBand makes things easy and does everything automatically with its Auto Tuning tool.

"It may sound complicated, but GarageBand does everything automatically"

Auto tuning tools

Discover GarageBand's features to help stay in tune



Isolate option

Clicking on the headphones icon will mute all of the other tracks except for the one that is selected. This is a helpful way to monitor the quality of the auto tuning that has been added to the track

Working out the key

If you are unsure of what key the instruments in your song are in, there are various apps available on OS X to help you work it out. Virtual DJ is a handy free app from the App Store. It offers a collection of useful audio-editing tools. It can also process tracks to work out what key they are being played in. Just feed all of that info into GarageBand.

Vocal styles

Experiment with other vocal styles such as Male Dance Vocals or Female RnB Vocals. These options will include various effects when you record vocals to help your voice fit in with that genre.

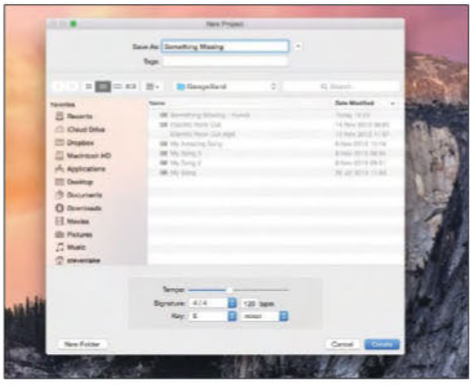
Basic Male/Female vocals

When auto tuning your voice, the Male Basic or Female Basic options are best for the most accurate results as they do not include any additional audio effects on top of the recording

Project Mode

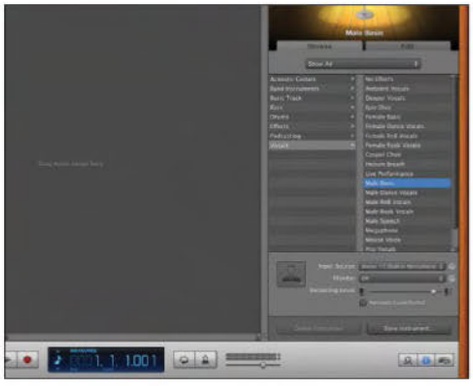
Project Mode in GarageBand is the most advanced way of working with tracks, enabling you to change the tempo, time signature and key information of a song

GarageBand | Auto tune vocals in GarageBand



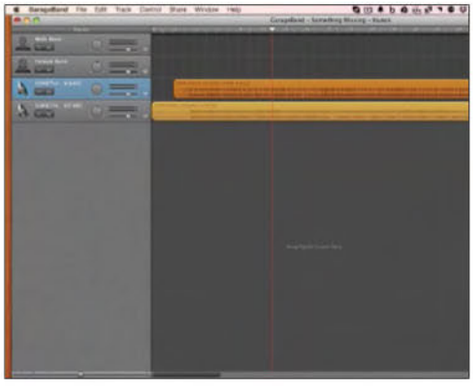
1: Project settings

Open GarageBand and then select New Project. Select Voice from the modes then click Choose. Title your track and select a time signature, BMP and Key.



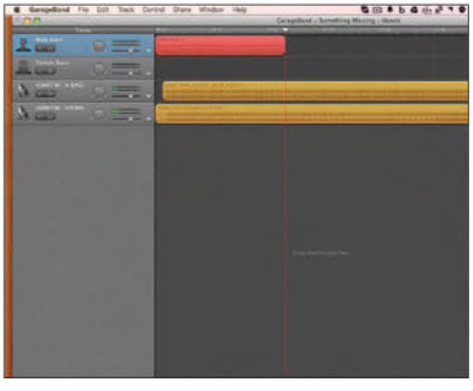
2: Vocal mode

Click Create. Once the interface is opened click Real Instrument in the Track Info window. Click Vocals and select a vocal type. Adjust the recording options below the categories.



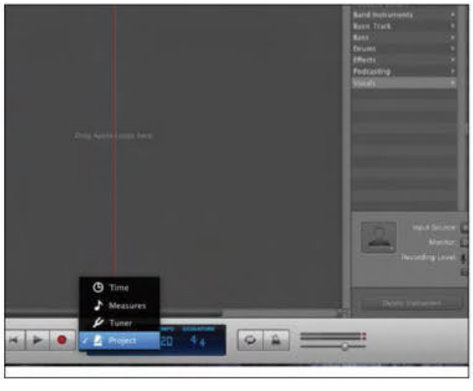
3: Record instruments

Click the + icon in the bottom-left corner to add instruments. Select an Instrument type, such as Real Instrument then click Create. Record as many tracks as necessary.



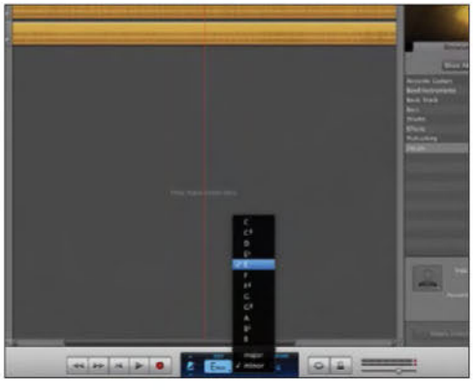
4: Record voice

Once you're ready, record your vocals by clicking the Record button. When you're finished, click the Track Editor icon in the bottom-right to view track editing options.



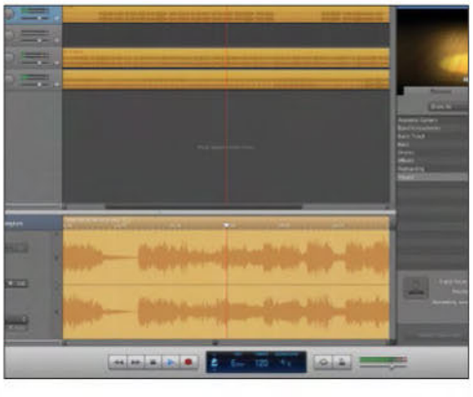
5: Project adjustments

In the Monitor window, click on the icon to the right to change modes. Select Project mode. This gives you more control over the key, tempo and time signature of your piece.



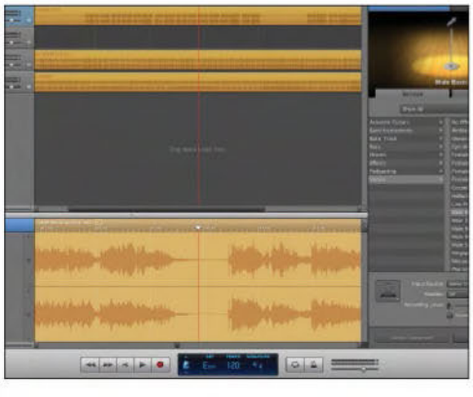
6: Check your key

In the Monitor Window, click Note underneath the Key subheading. Here you can change the key that your instruments are playing in. For accurate auto tuning the key must be correct.



7: Auto tuning

In the Track Editor beneath the Timeline, drag the dial to the right underneath the Automatic Tuning subheading. Go up to 100 to compare the results against having no auto tuning.



8: Auto tuning adjustments

Play through the song, adjusting the auto tuning to balance between in-tune singing and an authentic sound. The more out of tune the singing, the more auto tuning is needed.

9: Limit to Key

Tick the Limit to Key box to force the auto tuning to stick to the tuning you set the song to. This will tune your vocals to the same key that the instruments are playing in.

Create custom vocal templates

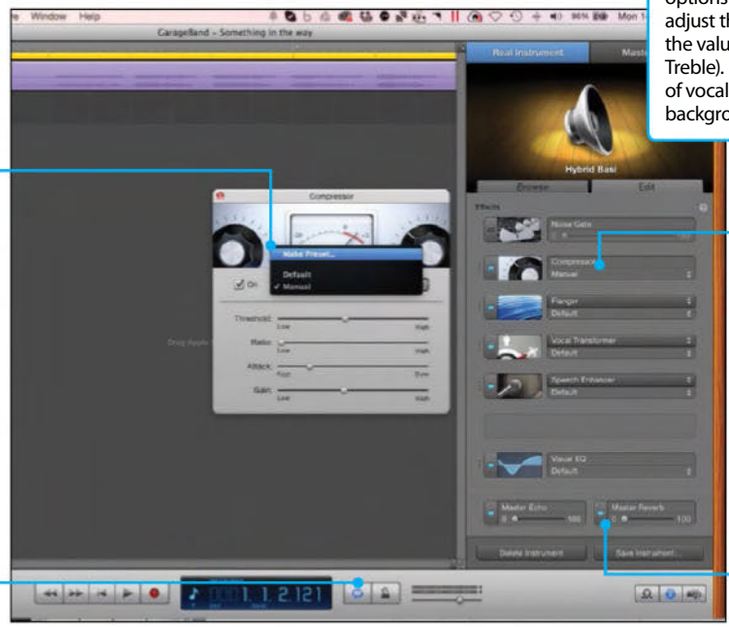
Build your own template using the very best of GarageBand's brilliant vocal effects

Vocal-enhancing effects are a simple way of improving the quality of your lead vocals within a GarageBand project. GarageBand does a great job of providing users with a selection of preset vocal templates, each one with its own selection of modified effects. Whether you want to emulate the sound of singing inside of an opera house, or apply vocal effects to make your voice fitting for an RnB tune, by combing GarageBand effects you can achieve any vocal style you desire. In this tutorial you'll learn how to combine different vocal effects to build your own custom vocal template. This template can then be saved to be used for future projects. Building vocal templates in GarageBand gives you complete creative control over the sound and style of your vocals, so let's get started.

"By combining GarageBand effects you can achieve any style you desire"

Working with effects

Make the most out of GarageBand's instrument effects



Creating effect presets

Any effect that you modify to be added to an instrument can be saved as its own preset effect. In the effect's Edit window, click Manual and select Make Preset

Equalising audio

The visual EQ tool (equaliser) presents equalising options in a visual format rather than enabling you to adjust the EQ with dials. The Waves seen here represent the value of each EQ segment (Bass, Low Mid, High Mid, Treble). EQ'ing is useful for adjusting the dynamic range of vocals and can also be used to reduce unwanted background noise from an imperfect recording.

Activating effects

With an audio layer selected in the Timeline window, whenever you play it you can turn effects in the Edit tab on and off to hear how the audio sounds with or without certain effects

Cycle region

Turn the Cycle Region option on when playing through a recording. The recording will continuously repeat while you turn effects on and off within the preset window to determine how each sounds

Master tools

Adjusting either the Master Reverb or Master Echo will apply that effect to your preset. These options can also be turned on and off like any other effect

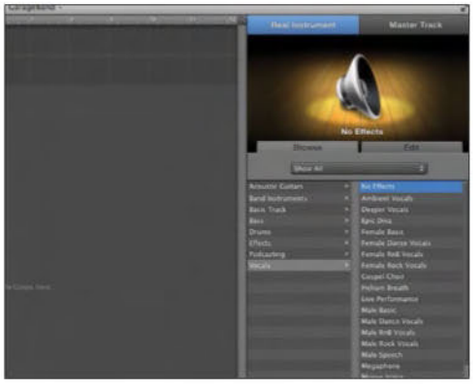
GarageBand | Create a vocal effects template

1: Create a project

Open GarageBand and select New Project. Select Voice. Once you've created a Voice project you'll be able to add other elements such as instruments and loops. Click Choose.

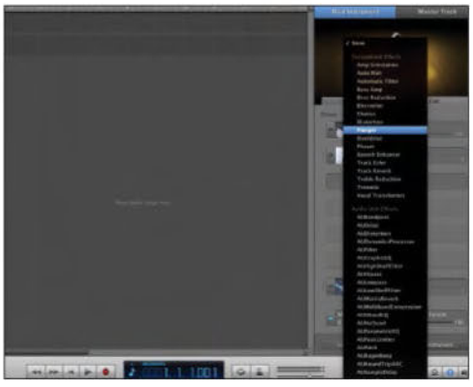
2: Project settings

Title your project and set a time signature, BPM and key. Click Create. Underneath the Real Instruments tab, the Vocals option will be presented, displaying vocal effect settings.



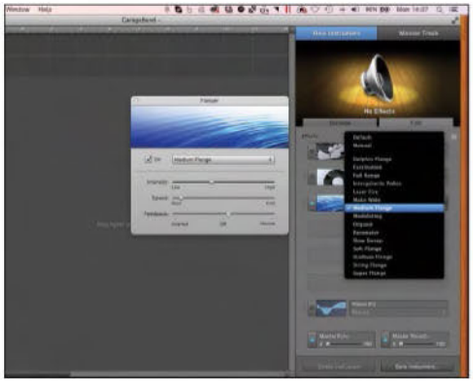
3: Select a preset

To build a Vocal template from scratch, select No Effects. Or you can choose from one of the preset vocal templates, each will come with predefined effects that can be modified.



4: Add vocal effects

With a preset selected, click on Edit. Here you'll see the effects in use for the preset. Select a blank effects box then select an effect from the list to add it to your template.

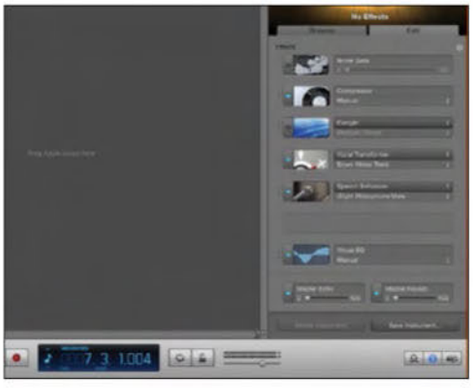


5: Modify your effects

Once you've added an effect, click on the effect icon thumbnail to modify it to your liking. Click Default below the effect name to select presets for that particular effect.

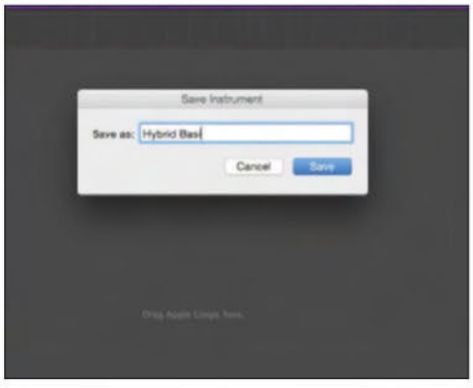
6: EQ adjustments

To change the EQ (Equalizer), click on the icon thumbnail next to Visual EQ at the bottom of the effects list. Click and drag on the EQ waves to adjust the template's overall EQ.



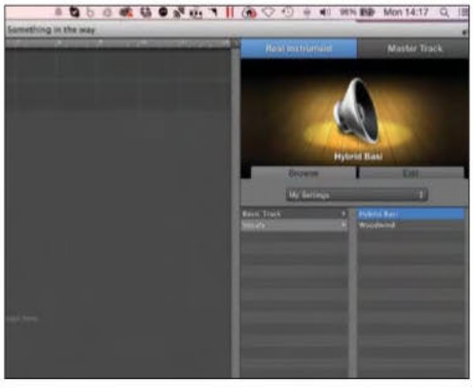
7: Test your settings

Hit Record and record some vocals. Play them back to test the added effects. Click on the turquoise light next to an effect to turn it on and off, then rerecord to compare versions.



8: Save your template

Adjust your effects accordingly, then when you're ready, click Save Instrument at the bottom of the Real Instruments window. Title your vocal template then click Save.



9: Access your templates

Click the Browse tab. Click on the drop-down menu, select My Settings, click Vocals and you'll see the template you just set up. Select it then record vocals using that template.

Use the Piano Roll Editor's Brush tool

Here's how to use one of Logic's significant new features – the Brush tool

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

In one form or another, the Piano Roll concept has been around since the early 1900s when the first mechanical Pianola pianos used a system of punched paper rolls to record and play back complicated musical performances. It's a firm favourite among Logic users, easily the most commonly used of the edit windows, and now version 10.1 has brought some cool new features to the Piano Roll table, such as Collapse View and Time Handles.

Chief among these additions, though, is a new tool – the Brush tool – which enables you to literally paint notes into the grid as if wielding a MIDI paintbrush. Let's take a closer look at what you can do with it – all the files needed to follow this tutorial can be downloaded from FileSilo.

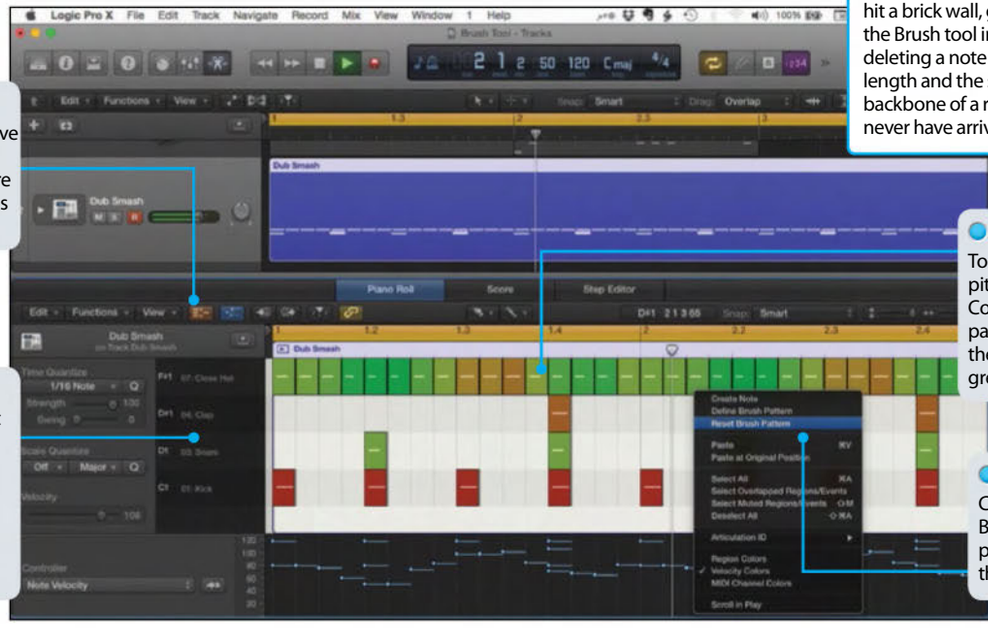
"The Brush tool enables you to paint notes into a grid as if wielding a paintbrush"

Brush up your MIDI programming

Logic's new Brush tool gives you a new perspective on grooves and melodies

Inspiration generation

The real beauty of the Brush tool is its inherent randomness. If your creativity has hit a brick wall, generating a sequence with the Brush tool in an unusual scale or mode, deleting a note or two, changing the note length and the sound can quickly deliver the backbone of a rhythm track that you would never have arrived at otherwise.



Collapse View

Click this button to remove unused pitches from the display, giving you a more focused view of the notes in your current pattern

Single note

To constrain notes to a single pitch, hold down the Shift and Command keys after you start painting the notes. They should then all snap to the same pitch – great for programming drums!

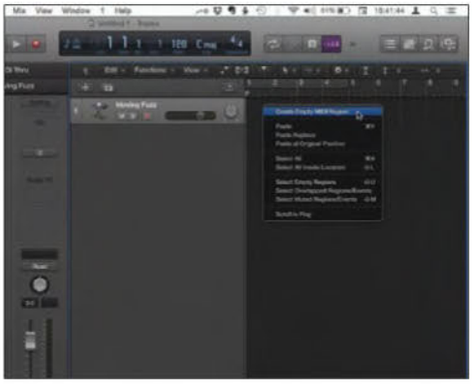
Drum Names

When using an Ultrabeat or Drum Machine/Kit Designer track, you can show the drum names for each individual pitch by selecting Drum Names from the Piano Roll's View menu

Reset brush pattern

Control-click and select Reset Brush Pattern to clear the brush pattern memory and restore the tool to its default state

Logic Pro X | Using the new Brush tool



1: Create track

Create an empty MIDI region on a software instrument track loaded with a suitable sound. We've gone for Synthesizer>Classics>Moving Fuzz in this example.

2: Select Brush tool

Open the Piano Roll Editor either by double-clicking the MIDI region or by clicking the scissors button in Logic's toolbar. Select the Brush tool from the bottom of the tool menu.

3: Scale quantize

The Brush tool works with the Scale Quantize function, over to the left of the vertical keyboard. This restricts any notes you paint to a particular scale, or set of notes.

4: Choose scale

Select a suitable root note and scale or mode from the pop-up menus – we've gone for C Major here. This means that only notes found in the C major scale will be inserted.

5: Paint notes

Using the Brush tool, click in the edit area and drag a shape like the one shown in the image above, to paint notes into the region at the currently selected quantize resolution.

6: Change resolution

Shorten the notes if required using the Pointer tool. To change the note resolution, select a new value from the Time Quantize menu. Here we've inserted a small cluster of 32nd notes.

7: One-click erase

Click with the Brush tool to delete any unwanted notes. You can also hold down and drag the tool to remove multiple notes, as if painting over them with an eraser.

8: Define brush pattern

With some or all of the notes selected, Control-click in the Editor and select Define Brush Pattern from the pop-up. This will store the current pattern in memory for you.

9: Create harmony

Now when you hold down and drag, the brush clones the original pattern. The cloned notes also constrain to the selected scale, making this a great technique for harmony creation!

Get to grips with Time Handles

We shine the spotlight on the new Time Handles feature in Logic Pro X

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

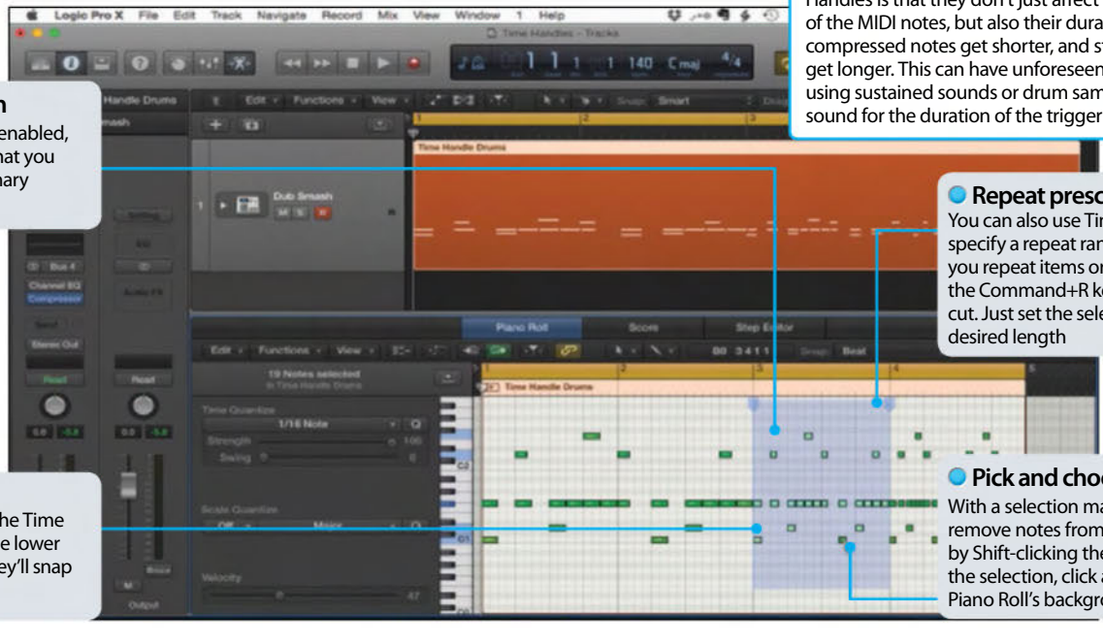
Logic Pro X version 10.1 brought an impressive array of new features, such as improvements to the Piano Roll Editor. Despite sounding slightly like a dodgy sci-fi novel, Time Handles allow you to select a range of MIDI notes and then stretch the selection right or left to either lengthen or shorten the pattern – great for quickly creating half or double-time sections of a drum track, for instance. It's a bit like Flex Time, but for MIDI notes not audio.

While it's true that this sort of thing could also be programmed by more conventional means, this method can speed things up considerably and is also capable of producing some unexpectedly cool-sounding results. Follow the steps for an introduction to how it works.

"Time Handles allow you to select a range of MIDI notes and stretch them"

Take your time

Time Handles – your flexible friend



Essential selection

Even with Time Handles enabled, any selection windows that you draw still behave as ordinary selection windows

Duration explanation

One thing to bear in mind when using Time Handles is that they don't just affect the position of the MIDI notes, but also their duration – compressed notes get shorter, and stretched notes get longer. This can have unforeseen effects when using sustained sounds or drum samples that only sound for the duration of the trigger note.

Repeat prescription

You can also use Time Handles to specify a repeat range for when you repeat items or events using the Command+R keyboard short-cut. Just set the selection to the desired length

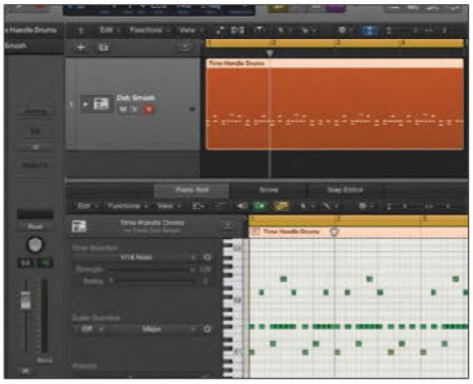
Border control

To adjust the borders of the Time Handle selection, drag the lower edges left or right and they'll snap to the next grid value

Pick and choose

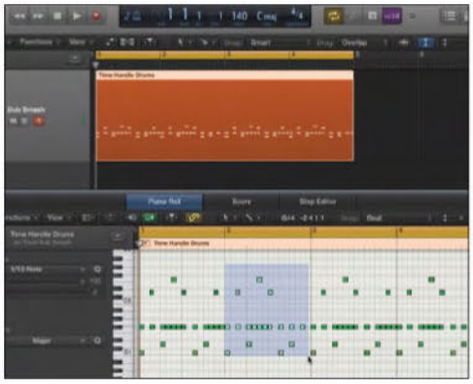
With a selection made, add or remove notes from the selection by Shift-clicking them. To cancel the selection, click anywhere in the Piano Roll's background

Logic Pro X | Time Handles explained



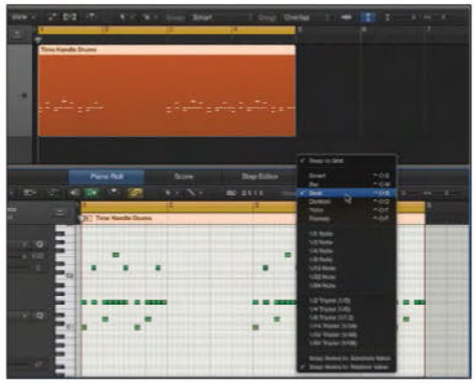
1: Import MIDI file

Import the MIDI file 'Time Handle Drums.mid' into an empty Logic project at 140bpm. Select the Drum Machine preset Dub Smash from the Library to play it back.



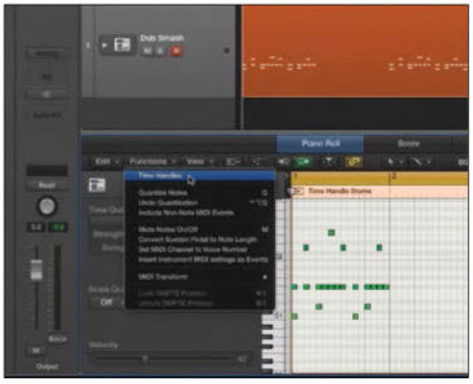
2: Make room

Double-click the MIDI region to open the Piano Roll Editor. Draw a selection rectangle around all of the MIDI notes in bar 2 as shown. Press Backspace to delete the notes.



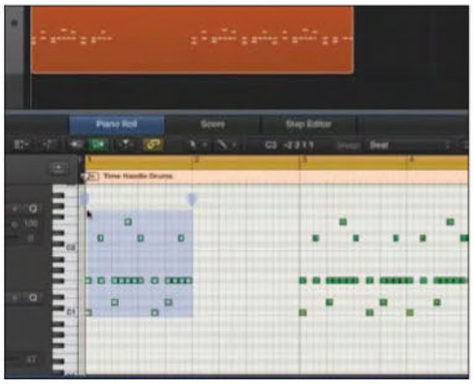
3: Set snap value

For the feature to work at its best, you need to first set the Piano Roll's snap value to Beat. This will make it easier for you to select and manipulate precise selection ranges.



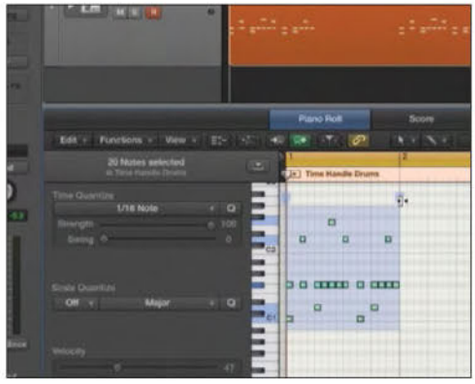
4: Enable Time Handles

Enable the Time Handles feature by selecting it from the Piano Roll Editor's local Functions menu. Now draw a new selection rectangle over the notes you want to manipulate.



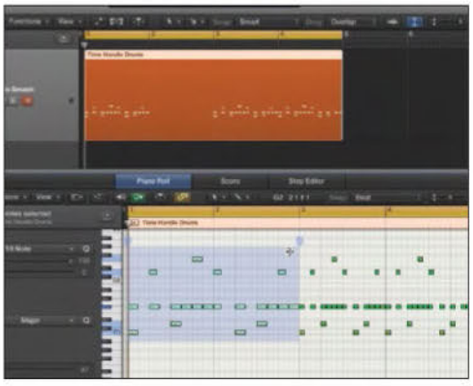
5: Highlight notes

Here we've selected all the notes in bar 1. Take note of the blue markers that have now appeared at the upper corners of the selection – these are the Time Handles.



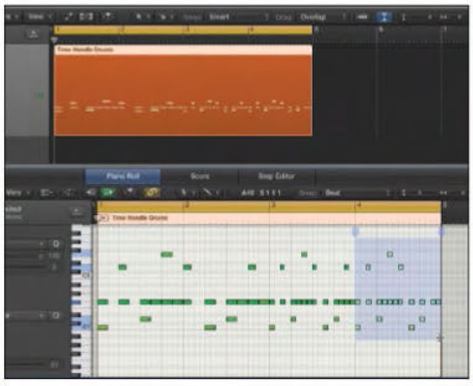
6: Compress or expand

When you mouse over one of the Time Handles, the cursor changes into a Flex tool. This allows you to drag the handles left or right to compress or expand the selection.



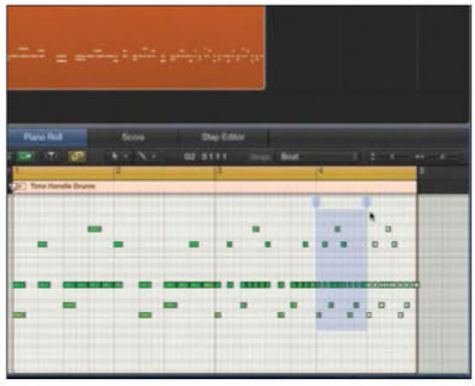
7: S-t-r-e-t-c-h

Grab the right-most Time Handle and drag it from bar 2 to bar 3, stretching out the first bar to cover the first two bars of the region. We now have a half-tempo section.



8: Get your fill

Repeated double-speed sections make great drum fills. To make one at the end of our pattern, start by drawing a selection window to precisely surround all the notes in bar 4.



9: Shrink and repeat

This time, shrink the selection to half length by dragging the right-most time handle to the left as shown. Then hit Command+R to repeat the selection, filling the rest of the bar.

Export Final Cut projects to Logic

Learn how to mix and master your Final Cut Pro projects in Logic Pro X's advanced suite

Providing a good-quality sound edit for your movies is as important as producing well-cut visuals. The two go hand in hand, but too often sound is overlooked in an edit. Dialogue, SFX and music can be edited and mixed in Final Cut Pro using the audio tools provided, but if you want to take your audio mix to the next level, it's definitely worth exporting your edit's audio to Apple's Logic Pro X audio-editing software.

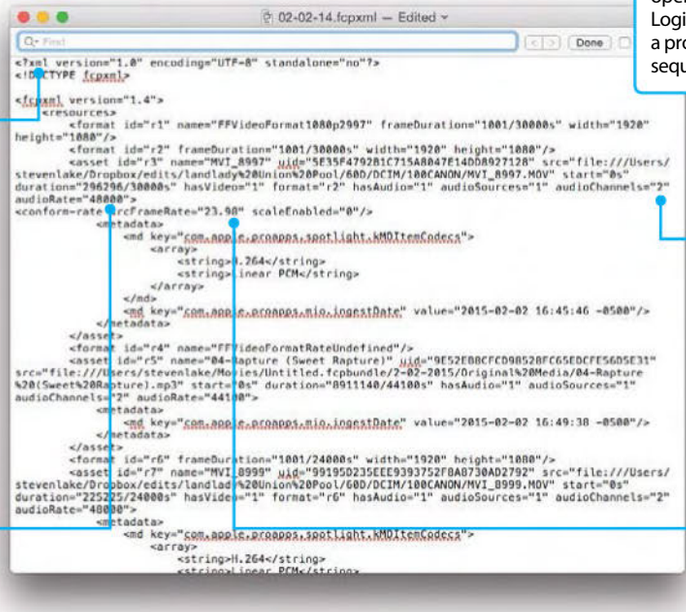
Your edit sequence in Final Cut Pro can be exported as an XML file. This file type enables you to transfer the data within a Final Cut sequence into other applicable software such as Logic and to replicate that sequence. The file only contains data; not actual audio or video media.

> "If you want to take your audio mix to the next level, load it up in Logic Pro X"

Deciphering XML code

How to read XML in Text Editor

XML coding
XML files can be opened in Text Editor. From here you can find information on your Final Cut sequence to help you when importing the XML file into other software such as Logicc



Other information
You can also find out the amount of audio channels in a sequence, the video format, file destinations and video codec information from the XML file. You can even edit the information manually

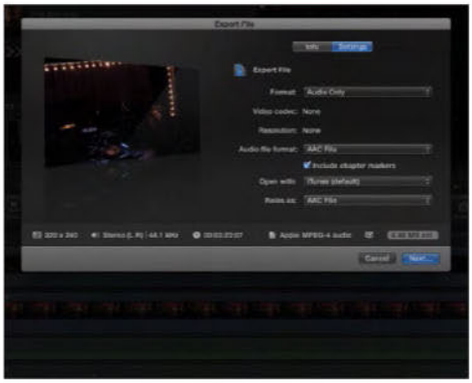
Audio rate
Next to audioRate= you will find the set frequency of the audio in the Final Cut sequence that you exported this XML file from. In this case the frequency is 48,000 and should remain like this

Frame rate
Next to srcFrameRate= you'll find the frame rate of your sequence. You will want to make sure that any projects you set up with this XML file match this same frame rate

What is an XML file?

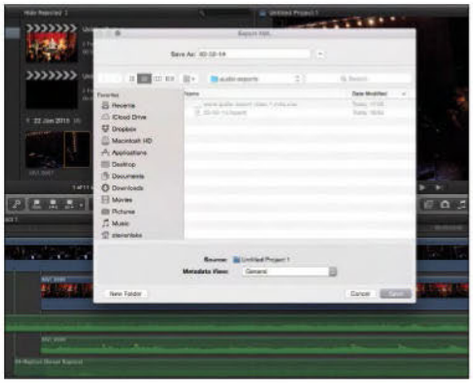
XML (Extensible Markup Language) files are able to transfer data between software that would otherwise be incompatible. Since you can't simply open a Final Cut Pro file in audio software such as Logic Pro X, an XML file will tell Logic how to build a project using the same files seen in the Final Cut sequence that the XML file was exported from.

Final Cut Pro X | Transfer audio from Final Cut Pro



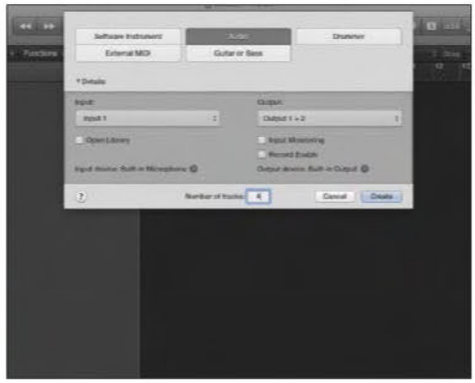
1: Exporting audio

In Final Cut Pro you can export audio only by clicking File>Share>Export file. Click Settings, and next to Format select Audio Only. Pick a file format, then click Next and select a destination.



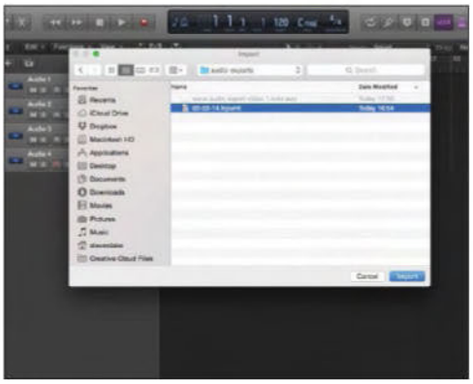
2: XML exports

In Final Cut Pro go to File>Export XML. By default the XML file is titled as the current date. Click Save and the XML file will instantly be saved to a selected folder on your computer.



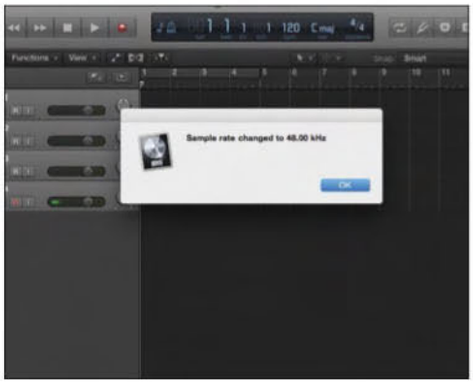
3: Create a Logic project

Open Logic Pro X. Go to File>New. Click Audio and select how many tracks you have in your Final Cut project. Click Create to create a new project timeline in Logic.



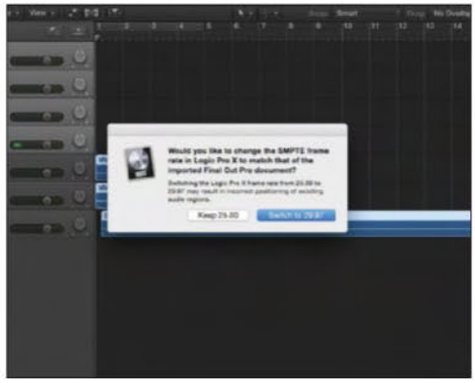
4: Import your XLM file

It's time to get the file in place. In Logic, go to File> Import>Final Cut XML. Locate the XML file that you exported from Final Cut Pro, select it and then click the Import option.



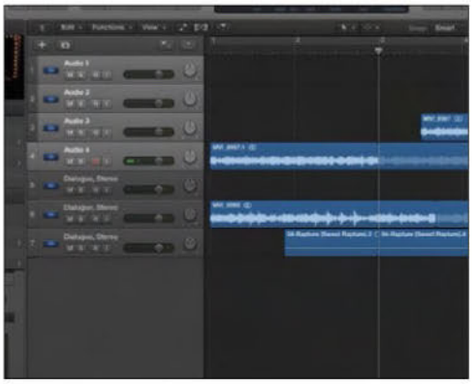
5: Sample rates

Logic may automatically change the sample rate of its project to match the XML file that you're importing. This will ensure your audio does not go out of sync when placed back into Final Cut.



6: Frame rate

You'll be asked if you want to adjust the frame rate. Select the one that matches your Final Cut project to avoid audio sync problems when you return the audio to Final Cut.

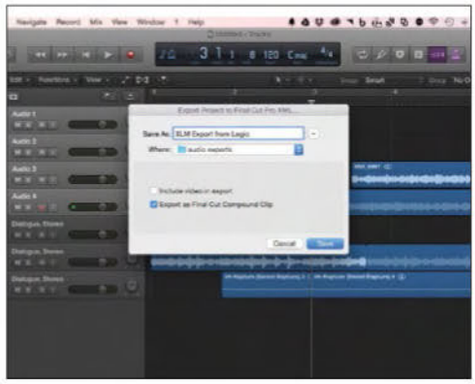


7: Edit your audio

Once the XML file has been fully imported into Logic, you will see the audio placement within the Logic project is exactly the same as that of your Final Cut Pro project.

8: Import new footage

In Logic go to File>Movie>Open Movie. Locate the video file you exported from Final Cut Pro alongside your XML file. The video will then appear in your Logic timeline.



9: Export from Logic

Click File>Export>Project to Final Cut Pro XML. You don't have to worry about including video in the export. Select the Compound clip to group all tracks together. Click Save to export.

Favourite or reject your iMovie clips

Better organise your clips and then filter them to see your best footage

Given that your iPhone and digital camera can record video clips, you may have an ever-growing collection of footage clogging up your Mac. This can lead to asset management problems in which you spend too much time wading through your clips in search of particular moments.

As iMovie stores imported video clips in a selection of separate chronological events, you have to rely on your memory to help find older or more recently captured clips. To help make it that bit easier to sort the good from the bad, iMovie offers a range of asset management tools. We'll show you how to label clips as Favorites, so that they can be found more easily. We'll also show you how to mark clips for rejection to help you clear out clutter.

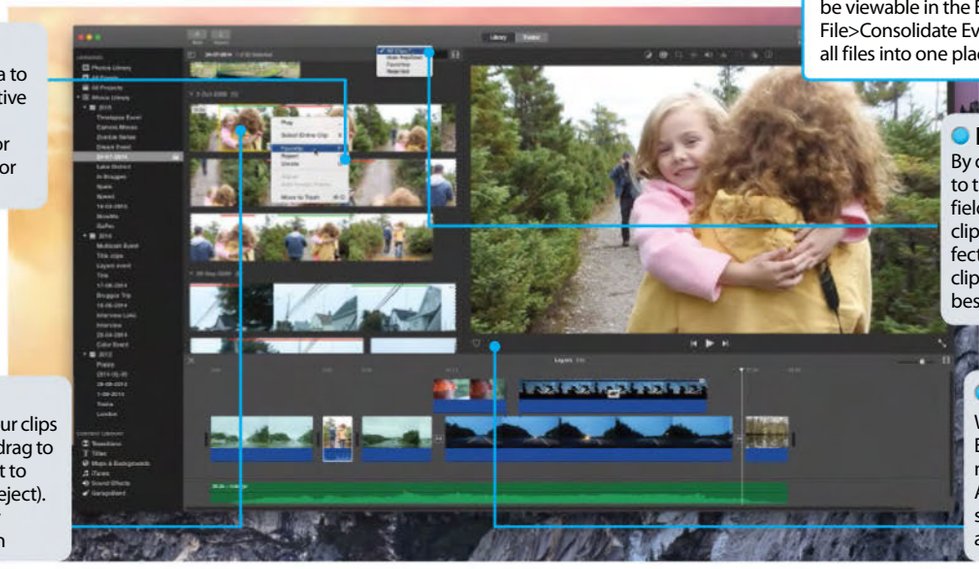
"iMovie offers a range of tools to help you sort the good clips from the bad"

Rate and filter

Sort the wheat from the chaff in your Event Browser

Rate the selection
Right-click the selected area to summon the context-sensitive pop-up menu. Then mark the selection as a Favorite or a Reject. A green (Favorite) or red (Reject) line appears

Make a selection
After scrubbing through your clips to preview them, click and drag to select an area that you want to mark as a Favorite (or as a Reject). A yellow border will appear around the selected section



Consolidate media
When editing a project you may import clips from a variety of locations into an event. However, if you fail to plug in an external hard drive containing particular clips, then they won't be viewable in the Event Browser. By choosing File>Consolidate Event Media, iMovie will copy all files into one place – its trusty Library.

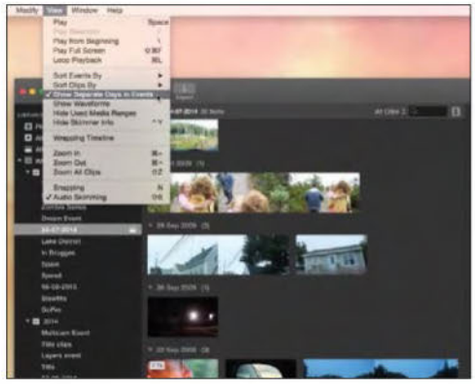
Filters
By clicking the pop-up icon next to the Event Browser's search field you can choose which rated clips will appear. This is an effective way to hide the rejected clips so that you can choose your best bits to add to a project

Shortcuts
When previewing a clip in the Event Browser you can tap F to mark a selection as a Favorite. Alternatively, click this heart-shaped icon to express your appreciation of the content

iMovie | Manage your video assets

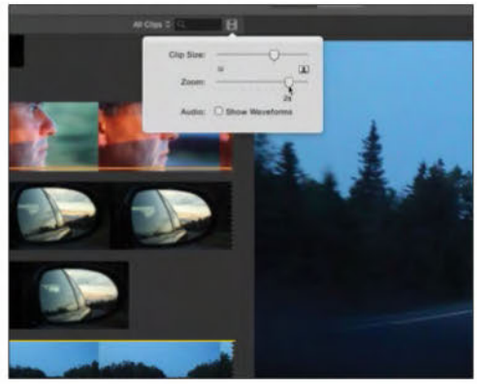
1: Choose a sort option

Go to View>Sort Events By. By default iMovie presents events in chronological order, with the newest at the top. You can choose to also sort them by Oldest, Newest or Name.



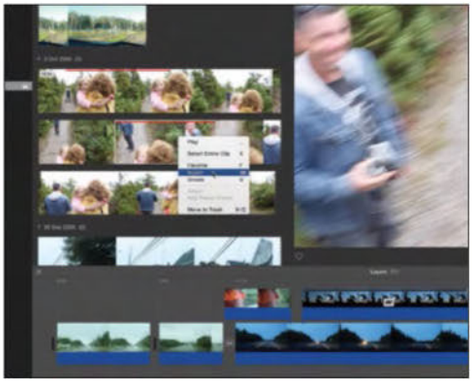
2: Show separate days

An event may store clips shot over a long period. To find clips more easily, choose View>Show Separate days in Events. This makes the list of thumbnails manageable.



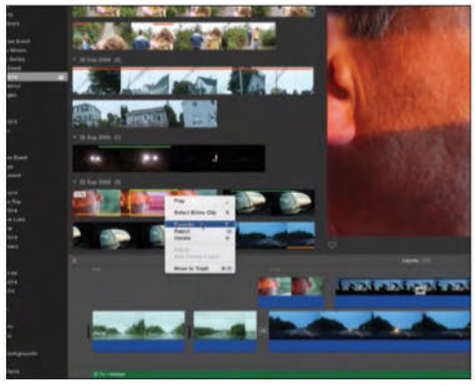
3: Zoom and magnify

To help you identify a clip, click the filmstrip icon next to the Event Browser's search field. Use the sliders to make the thumbnails bigger. Zoom to see more frames from each clip.



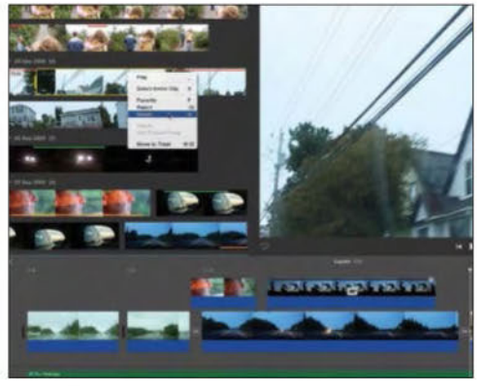
4: Mark for rejection

Scrub the cursor to preview Event Browser clips. Click and drag to select unusable sections (such as excessive camera shake). Right-click on the selection and click Reject.



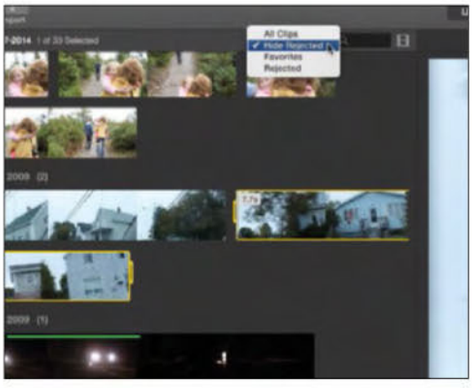
5: Mark as favourite

If there's part of a clip that you like, click and drag to select it and then right-click to summon the pop-up menu. Choose Favorite, press F or tap the heart-shaped icon.



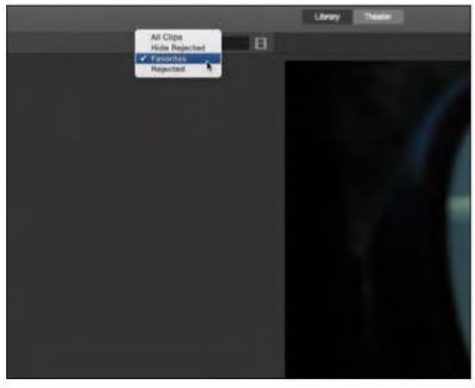
6: Unrate

Red lines mark rejected sections of a clip while green lines mark favourited sections. To remove red or green lines, select those areas and press U to apply the Unrate command.



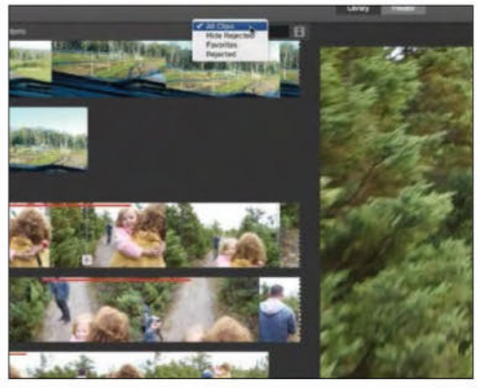
7: Filter your clips

Once you've rated your clips in the Event Browser, go to the pop-up section next to its search field. If you choose Hide Rejected then all red sections vanish from the Event browser.



8: Show favourite clips

If you choose the Favorites filter option from the search field's pop-up menu, then only selections with a green bar will appear in the Event Browser. Everything else will be hidden.



9: Reveal all

The Event Browser's filter lets you de-clutter an event so that you can access your best clips. However, nothing is deleted so you can review rejected sections by choosing All Clips.

Add camera moves to timelapse footage

Enhance your statically framed timelapse projects with digitally created zooms, tilts and pans

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

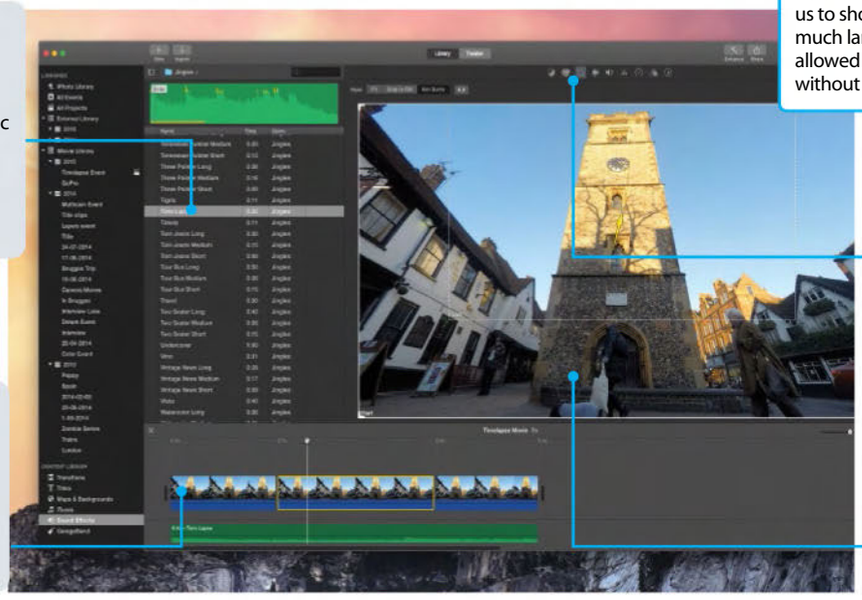
Video footage is usually captured at frame rates such as 25 or 30 frames per second (fps). When you play the footage the action unfolds at a 'real time' speed. On the other hand, the timelapse technique captures an image at specified intervals (such as one frame every five seconds). In a timelapse clip you can see the hands of a clock spin more quickly (as you'll see in our downloadable source clip). It is possible to capture timelapse sequences on an iPhone (if it's running iOS 8) or on specialised gadgets such as the GoPro Hero4 Silver. To capture a successful timelapse sequence your camera needs to be fixed on a static tripod. Thanks to iMovie's Ken Burns tools you can add more interesting camera moves to statically framed timelapse clips.

"It is possible to capture timelapse sequences on an iPhone if it's running iOS 8"

Zoom in

Add a digital zoom to timelapse footage

Music
To enhance your timelapse footage, click the Sound Effects library and open the Jingles folder. Drag the Time Lapse music clip to the Timeline. To enhance your timelapse footage, click the Sound Effects library and open the Jingles folder. Drag the Time Lapse music clip to the Timeline



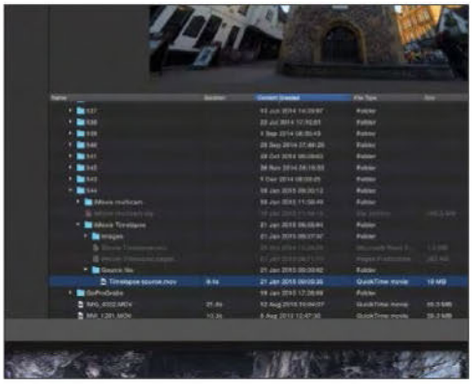
Size is important
When you use Ken Burns to zoom into a close-up of a clip, you run the risk of making delicate details look fuzzy. Our GoPro Hero 4 enabled us to shoot at a high 4K resolution, which is much larger than ordinary HD footage. This allowed us to zoom into the clock tower without a noticeable drop in image quality.

Cropping
The Cropping icon enables you to select cropping tools to improve composition. By clicking on the Ken Burns button you can animate the crop window to start off wide and then zoom in on an interesting detail

Let's split
By splitting a single timelapse sequence into sections, you can start off with a wide shot in the first section and then zoom in during the second section. The third section holds a static, zoomed-in version of the scene

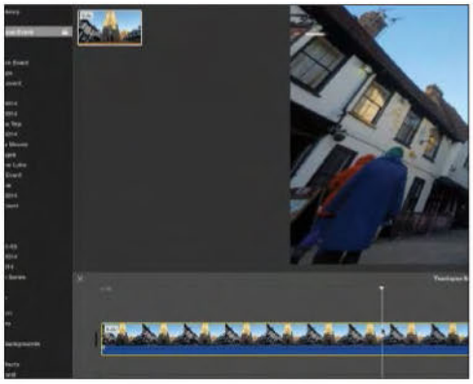
Start and End
The Ken Burns tools feature adjustable Start and End rectangles. You can drag these to specify the position of the virtual camera at the beginning and end of each clip. A yellow arrow indicates the direction of the camera move

iMovie | Add camera moves to timelapse clips



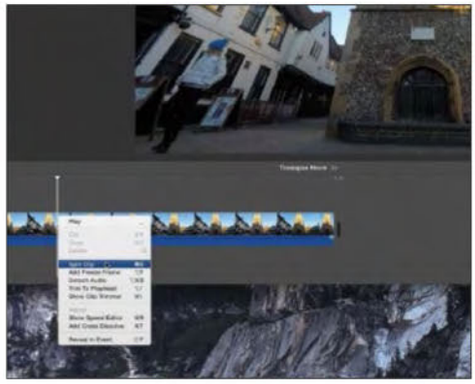
1: Import the clip

Go to File>New Movie. In the Create window choose No Theme. Click Create. Click OK. Click Import Media. Browse to our GoPro sourced Timelapse clip. Click Import Selected.



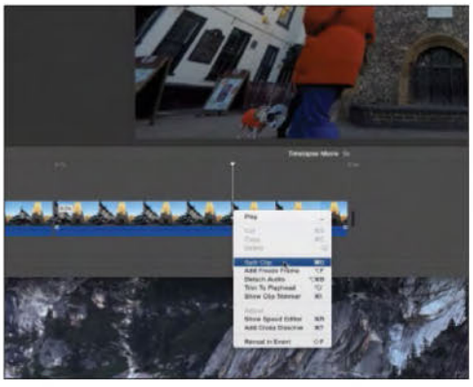
2: Add to Timeline

Double-click on the thumbnail in the Event window to add a yellow selection border to the whole clip. Drag the clip to the Timeline. Play the clip to see the timelapse action unfold.



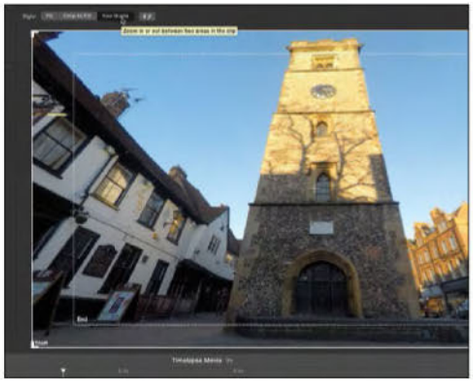
3: Split the clip

At this stage the camera remains static throughout. Scrub the playhead until the girl in the blue hat is about to exit the frame. Right-click on the clip and choose Split Clip.



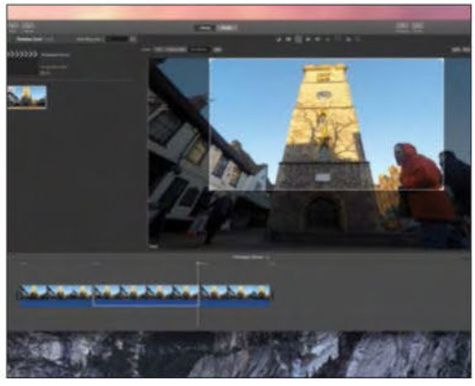
4: Split it again

Scrub the playhead forward until the lady in red is passing by the tower. Right-click and choose Split Clip. The timelapse clip is now chopped up into three sections.



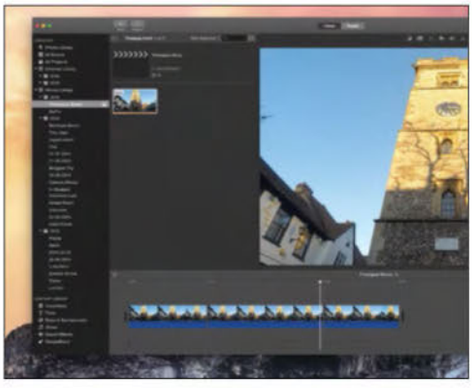
5: Choose Ken Burns

Click on the middle section of the timelapse footage. Click on the Cropping icon above the main viewer. Then in the Style section click on the Ken Burns button.



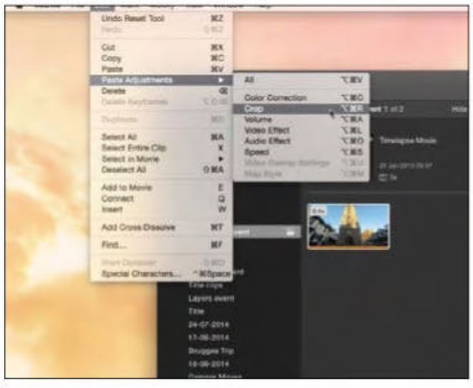
6: Choose zoom end point

Click on the End rectangle to select; it will change to a white border. Drag a corner handle to shrink the size of the End rectangle. Drag inside the rectangle to place around the tower.



7: Test the zoom

Click the blue tick icon to apply the zoom. Play the sequence. The camera will zoom in to the End point of the middle section. It will then jump back out to full frame in the third section.



8: Copy the zoom

Click on the middle section in the Timeline. Choose Edit>Copy. Click on the third section and choose Edit>Paste Adjustments>Crop. The third section will now also contain a zoom.

9: Adjust zoom start

Click on the third section. Click the Cropping icon. Drag the Start rectangle and place it over the End one. Click the tick. Now the third section will feature a static zoomed-in frame.

Fake a multi-camera shoot in iMovie

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

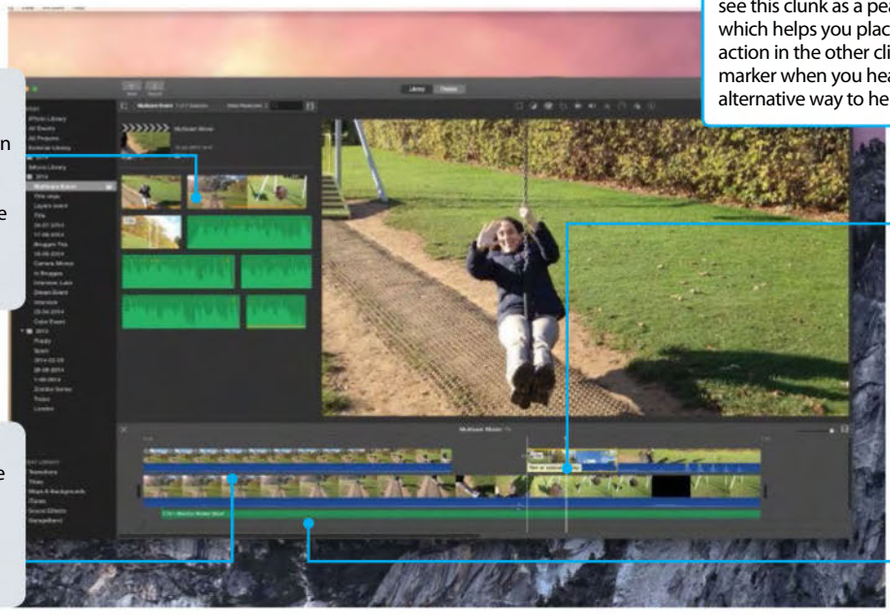
Edit clips from a single source together to look like you're covering action from multiple camera angles

In these digital days there are many ways to capture action on a camera. With an iPhone always to hand you can capture spontaneous events as video clips. Small sporty cameras such as the GoPro Silver Pro 4 enable you to film point of view (POV) shots of activities in high definition (without running the risk of cracking the screen of your less robust iPhone). When filming repetitive action (such as a friend whizzing past on a zip-wire) you can capture the action from different angles. You can then cut the best bits from each repeated shot into a smooth-flowing sequence that looks like it was captured 'live' from a range of camera angles. These changing shot sizes and angles make your faux 'multi-cam' sequence look more professional and dynamic.

"Cut the best bits from each repeated shot into a smooth-flowing sequence"

Mimic multi-cam

Cut between different camera angles



Multiple angles

Here we have three clips of the same action (a girl whizzing down a zip-wire). We got the girl to repeat the action and filmed it from different angles. The orange bars below each clip indicate which sections were used in the final edit

Make your mark

When the girl reaches the end of the zip-wire there's a clunk that's audible in every camera angle clip. You can see this clunk as a peak in each clip's audio channel, which helps you place the POV clip in sync with the action in the other clips. Tap the M key to place a blue marker when you hear the clunk. This marker offers an alternative way to help you sync your clips' action.

Split clip

By splitting a clip on the top layer and then trimming its start point, it is possible to reveal some of the parallel action from the layer below from different camera angles

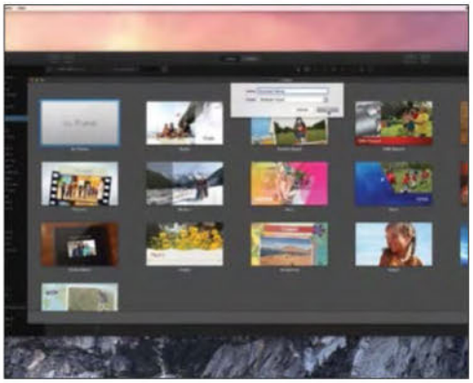
Layers

As the zip-wire action is the same in each clip here, we can run the clips together as parallel layers in the Timeline. The content of the top layer is always visible in the main window

Music

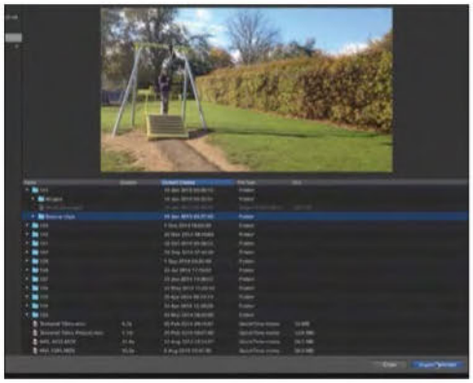
A dynamic music track from the Sound Effects library's Jingles folder helps knit our three separate video clips into a smooth-flowing multi-cam narrative. This helps it run in 'real time'

iMovie | Fake a multi-camera shoot



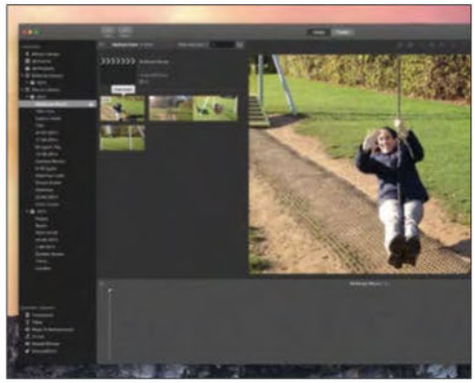
1: Create an event

Go to File>New Event. Label the event 'Multicam Event'. Go to File>New Movie. In the Create window choose No Theme. Click Create. Name the movie 'Multicam Movie'. Click OK.



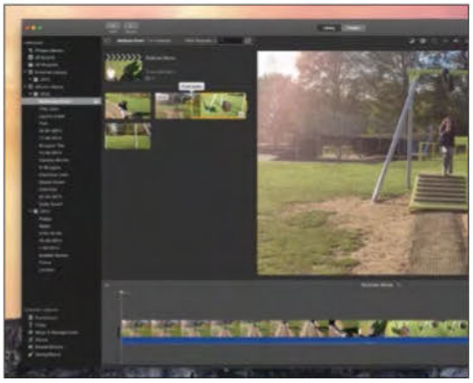
2: Import the clips

A new Project icon will appear, as well as an empty Timeline. Click the Import Media button and browse to select our folder of source clips. Click Import Selected.



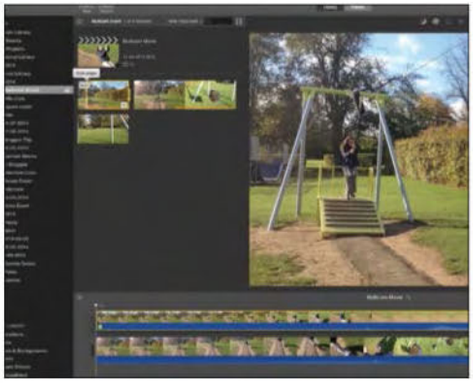
3: Preview the clips

In the Event window, scrub the cursor along each clip to view a preview of its content. This helps you get to know the action in each camera angle and spot any continuity problems.



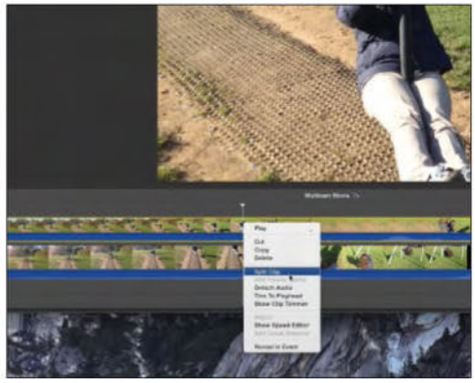
4: Select and add

Click on the Front Angle clip. Click and scrub to select it from just as the girl starts to slide forward until the end of the action. Drag this yellow selection into the Timeline.



5: Add second angle

Click and scrub to select the Side Angle clip from where the girl starts to slide until the clip's end. Drag the yellow selection and place it above the Side Angle clip in the Timeline.

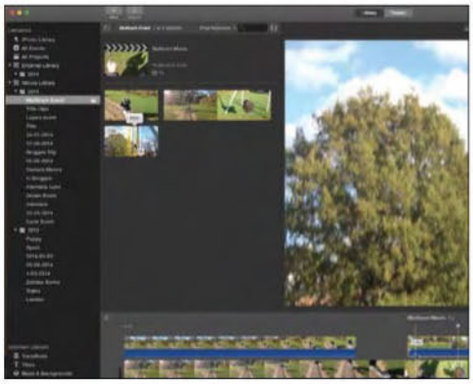


6: Split the top clip

You now have two parallel clips running on separate layers. Scrub along the top layer until she grabs the chain with both hands. Right-click and choose Split Clip.

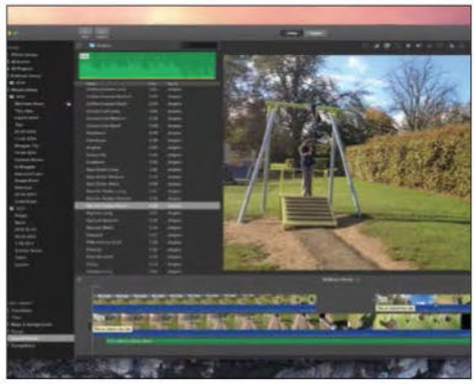
7: Trim the top layer

Click to select the second part of the top clip. Drag its start point right to trim it down to 1.9 seconds. This gap reveals some of the parallel action on the lower layer.



8: Add POV shot

Select the POV clip where the girl hits the end of the zip-wire with a clunk. Drag it to the gap in the Timeline's top layer. Use the 'clunk' sound to help sync the POV action with the other clips.



9: Fine-tune the start point

Drag the start of the lower layer left to extend its start time. Extend the start time of the upper layer's clip, too. Trim the POV clip to reveal more of the Front Angle clip.

Master Final Cut's stabilisation tools

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

Move, scale and rotate your footage in order to smooth out unwanted camera shake

There's no rule that your video footage has to be captured from a locked off tripod and thus be perfectly stable. Some directors will shoot a scene with a handheld camera to add some energy to the footage. After the Blair Witch Project movie kick-started the Found Footage genre, we've all become familiar with shaky handheld camera work in big screen dramas.

Having shaky footage suits certain productions, but there may be occasions when it is just too wobbly. Final Cut's post-production stabilisation tools digitally analyse for shake and then smooth it. This is done by cropping the shot and then moving it horizontally, vertically and even rotationally to counteract shake.

"Some directors will shoot a scene freehand to add some energy to it"

Stabilise shaky footage

Choose an appropriate method to meet your project's needs

Stabilisation options

Click on this box to apply the Stabilization tools to the selected clip in the Timeline. Final Cut Pro X will then analyse the movement in the footage and counteract it for a smoother shot. You can toggle this blue box on and off to see the footage with and without stabilisation

Cropping

If a clip is very shaky then you may notice black bars occasionally appearing at the edge of the stabilised footage. You can click here and choose the Crop option to lose black bars at the edge of stabilised clips

Shooting tips

When shooting handheld, film at a large resolution and leave some space around your main subject. This gives Final Cut more space to work with so there's less danger of losing important detail (such as the top of someone's head) when the stabilisation tools crop the frame. Cameras such as the GoPro Hero 4 Silver let you film at a massive 4K resolution, so you can produce stable HD-sized footage more easily.

Method

Choose a suitable stabilisation method to suit your clip's requirements. The default Automatic method works well at reducing camera shake, but to preserve camera moves such as pans and zooms, try the InertiaCam method

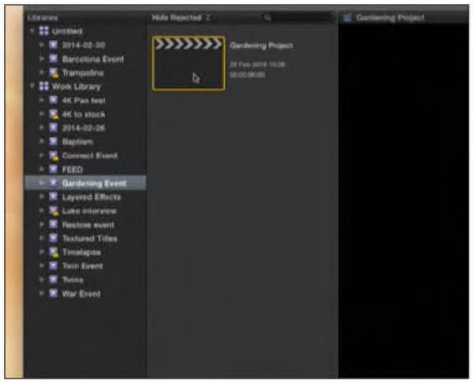
Translation, rotation and scale

The Translation and Rotation sliders cause a camera shake to be counteracted by moving the clip in the X and Y axis. Scale helps counteract shaky zooms by moving the clip in the Z axis. All these values can be adjusted to achieve a compromise between smoothing movement while preserving edge detail

Final Cut Pro X | Stabilise shaky footage

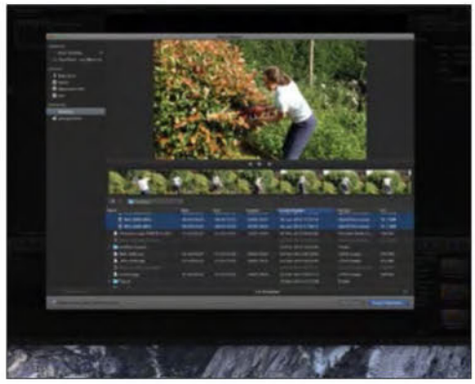
1: Shoot to edit

When filming handheld, try and avoid 'hose-piping' (where the camera moves mindlessly). Frame your subject and hold steady. This will help Final Cut do a better stabilisation job.



2: Create new event

Go to File>New Event. Label the event with a suitable name. Click OK. Click on the event in the Libraries pane. The event will contain a new project; click on the Project icon.



3: Import media

Go to File>Import Media. Browse to locate your folder of source files. Shift-click to select them and then click Import Selected. They'll be added to the event that you created.

4: Edit your clips

Add your clips to the Timeline and trim them so that the action flows. By trimming the clips first, you don't waste time trying to stabilise shaky footage that won't feature in your film.

5: Turn on Stabilization

Click on a shaky clip in the Timeline to select it. Choose Window>Show Inspector. Tick the box next to Stabilization to turn it blue. The clip will be analysed for shake.

6: Smooth out shake

By default the Stabilization tool will use the Automatic mode to counteract shake and create a more steadily-framed shot. Remaining camera movement will be smoother.

7: Fine-tune

If the camera still shakes, increase the value of the Smoothness slider. Be aware that this will crop more of the frame edge. A lower value will reveal more frame edge, but look shakier.

8: Preserve pans

Some of your footage might feature deliberate camera moves such as pans or zooms. To preserve these moves while smoothing out unwanted shake, set Method to InertiaCam.

9: SmoothCam

To fine-tune the amount of horizontal, vertical and scale movements that the Stabilization tool produces, tick SmoothCam and adjust the sliders manually.

Create wild weather effects in Final Cut

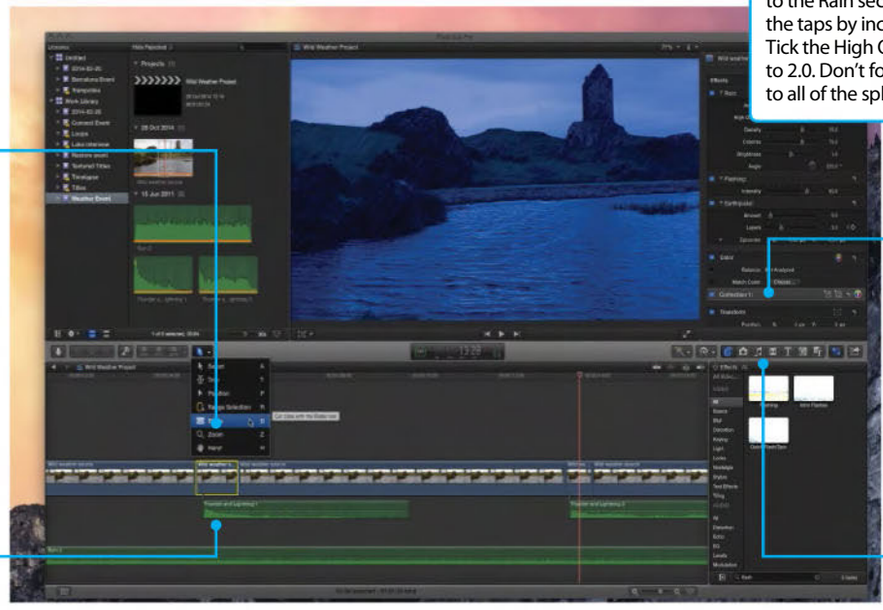
Enhance your footage by using grading tools to turn day to night and add flashes of lightning

Sometimes we'll need to use Final Cut Pro X's grading tools to alter a clip's colours and tones so that they look like they do in real life. This helps us overcome colour and exposure problems produced by incorrect camera settings. At other times we might desire to make more creative changes to colour and tone. In this walkthrough we'll demonstrate how to add atmosphere to a scene by changing day to night with a little post-production grading. We'll also add weather elements that would be challenging to shoot for real, such as sheets of rain. We'd be reluctant to shoot during a thunderstorm despite the dramatic results we might capture on camera. Fortunately, Final Cut Pro can unleash a digital deluge on our location courtesy of its Effects browser.

"Add atmosphere to a scene by changing day to night and more"

Video effects

Add weather effects such as rain and lightning



Split clip

We added a Rain effect to the entire clip. We then used the Blade tool to create a shorter section of footage that featured several extra effects, such as flashes of lightning and camera shake

Sound effects

We enhanced our creative project's visual effects by adding a layer of audio effects (such as rain and thunder) from the Final Cut Pro Ambience folder

Enhance the rain

To give the streaks of computer-generated rain more impact, click a clip to select it and then go to the Rain section of the Video Inspector. Turn on the taps by increasing the Amount slider's value. Tick the High Quality button. Push Brightness up to 2.0. Don't forget to apply these Rain changes to all of the split clips in the timeline.

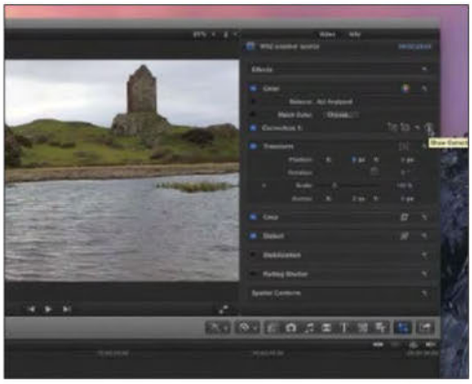
Colour correction

Click on the Show Correction icon to access colour- and tone-tweaking tools that can give your daytime-captured footage a colder nocturnal look

Effects browser

Here we can find a range of drag and drop footage-enhancing preset effects, such as flashes of lightning and the ground-shaking Earthquake effect

Final Cut Pro X | Add weather effects and creative grading



1: Import clips

Import our Wild Weather clip into Final Cut Pro and add it to a new project. Go to Window>Show Inspector. In the Color section of the Inspector, click the Show Correction icon.

2: Adjust colour

In the Color panel, drag the Shadows control point up to 32%. Drag Midtones up to 38%. Drag Highlights up to 32%. This adds a bluer nocturnal hue to the clip's colours.

3: Tweak the tone

Go to the Exposure panel and drag the Shadows control point down to -13%, leave Midtones at 0% and drop Highlights to -10%. This will create gloomier lighting.

4: Add rain

Click the Show Effects browser icon. Go to Stylize. Drag Rain onto the clip. Drag the arrow to change the direction of the rain. A larger circle creates longer streaks.

5: Split the clip

Place the cursor at 5:00 sec. Press B to activate the Blade and then click in order to split the clip. Scrub forward to 6 sec and split the clip again to create a 1 sec section.

6: Add lightning effects

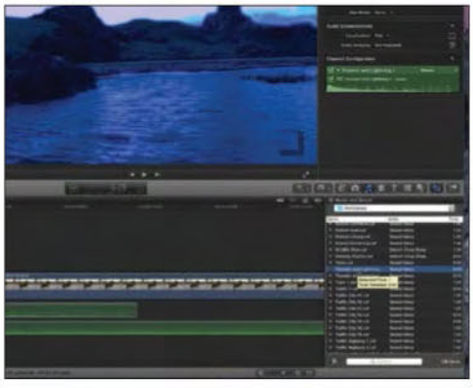
Press A to go back to the Select tool. Go to the Light section of the Effects browser. Drag Flashing onto the split 1 second section to add flashes of lightning to it.

7: Shake things up

Go to the Distortion section of the Effects browser and drag the Earthquake effect onto the split 1 second section. This makes the camera shake as the lightning strikes.

8: Fine tune properties

Go to the Video Inspector panel. Reduce the Earthquake Amount slider to 5 to create a more subtle camera shake. Drop the Flashing Intensity slider to 85.



9: Add sound effects

Go to the Sound browser and open the Final Cut Pro Sound Effects Ambience folder. Drag Thunder and Lightning 1 below the lightning clip. Add some Rain too.

Fix audio problems in Final Cut Pro X

FILES ONLINE
Download the files at filesilo.co.uk/bks-705

Improve the sound quality of your videos in just minutes with Final Cut's pro-level editing tools

When filming we are likely to spend more time thinking about how the shot looks rather than how it sounds. This can lead to well-composed, correctly-exposed video clips that suffer from audio problems. As many of us shoot with digital cameras or iPhones, it can be a challenge to monitor the sound as it is recorded, which can lead to disappointment when we play the clips back. When we listen to an interviewee we focus on what they're saying, but our microphone is just as likely to pick up unwanted ambient noise. There may even be a hum on the audio track caused by electrical equipment. Fortunately Final Cut Pro X has tools dedicated to enhancing your audio quality.

"Final Cut Pro X has a wide range of tools dedicated to enhancing your audio quality"

Sound advice

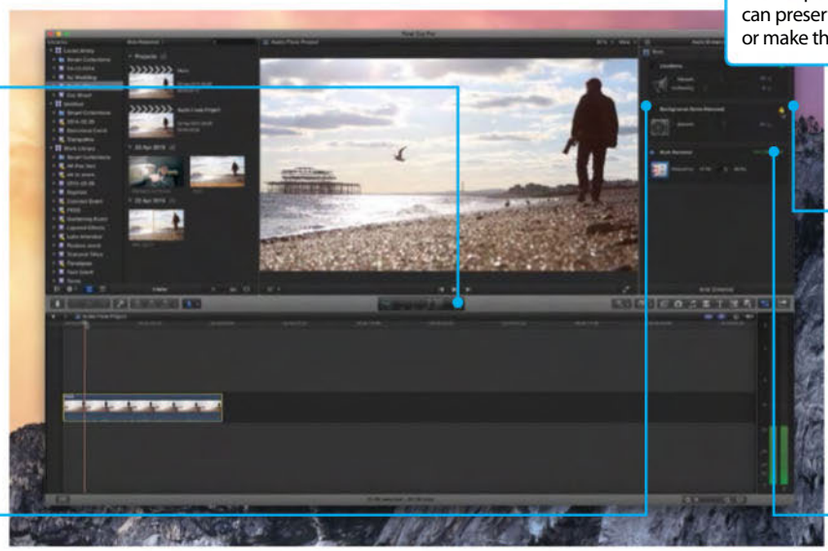
Fix audio problems with ease

Loudness

The Audio Enhancements panel has a handy Loudness attribute. By ticking this you can boost weaker sound levels to make them stronger and more audible. If the sound levels vary in strength, then experiment with the Uniformity slider. This can preserve the difference in a clip's sound levels or make them more uniform and consistent.

Audio meters

By default you see a tiny preview of the shot's audio levels here in the Dashboard. Double-click on this icon to summon the larger and more useful audio meters at the bottom-right corner of the workspace



Analyse sound

After clicking the Auto Analysis icon in the Audio Inspector, Final Cut Pro X will analyse the clip. Particular problems will be flagged up in the Audio Enhancements panel

Tick box

If a problem is indicated, tick the adjacent box to correct it. A blue rectangle indicates that the correction is applied. Toggle the correction on and off by clicking the box. This enables you to hear a before and after version

Job done

After fixing a problem the appropriate warning icon will be replaced by a green text label that describes what correction has been applied. You can fine-tune the fix by dragging a slider (or clicking a switch to change a hum frequency in this instance)

Final Cut Pro X | Fix problems with sound

1: Import clip

Choose File>New Event and label it Audio Fixes. Tick Create New Project, click OK. Choose File>Import>Media, pick 'Background Noise.mov'. Click Import Selected.

2: Check sound levels

Drop the clip into the Timeline. Go to Window>Show Audio Meters. The meters turn yellow if levels get too close to 0db and red if it peaks too loudly. Our levels stay green.

3: Show Inspector

Although the clip's audio levels are nice and strong, there's a distracting background noise from the car engine. Go to Window>Show Inspector. Click on the Audio tab.

4: Analyse audio

In the Audio Enhancement section, click the arrow next to Audio Analysis. Final Cut Pro X will analyse the sound and flag up potential problems, such as background noise.

5: Remove background noise

Click the box to the left of Background Noise Removal to turn this enhancement on. The background noise will diminish while the subject's voice will sound clearer.

6: Choose a compromise

If your subject's voice sounds too tinny and sharp you can restore some of the clip's missing bass by dragging the slider left. Drag right to remove even more bass.

7: Boost volume

Click the arrow at the top-left to return to the Audio Inspector. A green tick indicates that audio problems have been resolved. Push Volume up to 5 for a stronger overall sound.

8: Reduce hum

Import 'Hum.mov' into Final Cut Pro X. Add the clip to the Timeline. When you analyse the clip a problem with hum will be detected and flagged up straight away.

9: The right frequency

Click the box next to Hum Removal to make Final Cut automatically filter out the hum. In this instance it chooses the 60Hz setting as the most effective. The hum is eradicated.

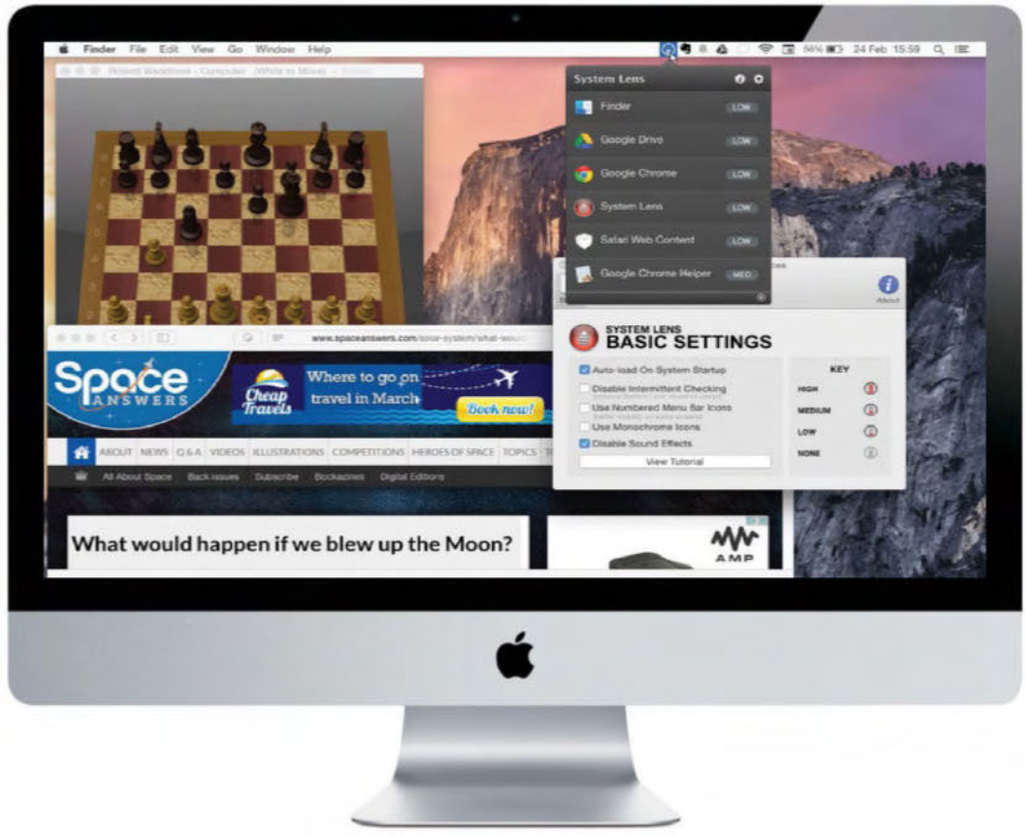
Extend your MacBook's battery life

Monitor the energy use of the apps you run and close those that drain the most power

Apple's battery technology is significantly better than its rivals, but trying to get through a whole day on a charge can still be challenging. To ensure the battery lasts as long as possible you must keep an eye on the apps that are using the most energy. High energy usage drains the battery very quickly and the menu bar battery indicator helpfully shows apps that are using the most, but it lacks detailed information.

To get more you can run Activity Monitor, but it is a bit too technical for some. System Lens, a free app in the Mac App Store, is just right. It classifies apps as low, medium and high energy and you can set your own custom warning levels. Apps can then be closed to reduce energy usage.

"Trying to get through a whole day on a single charge can still be challenging"



View energy usage

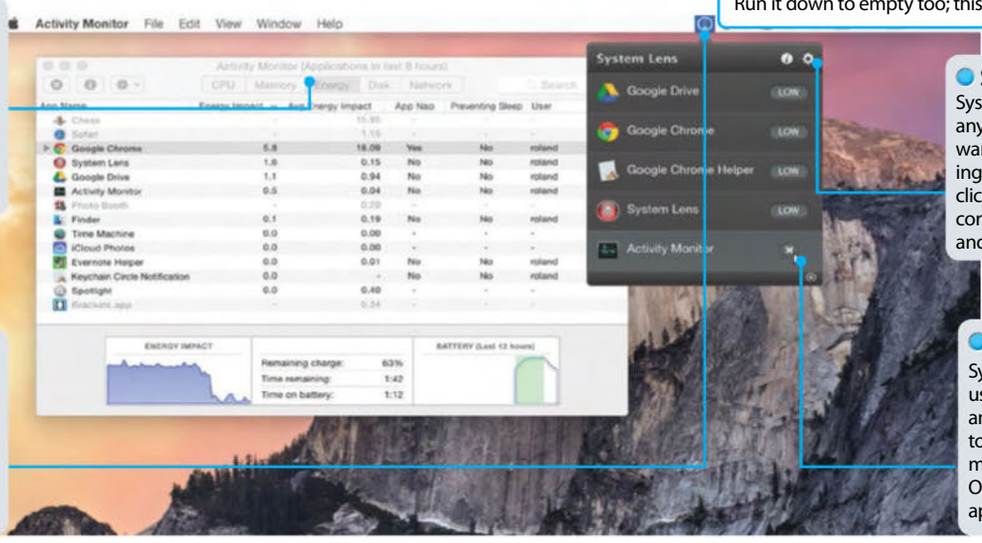
Explore OS X's energy usage information

How to maintain battery health

The more you use most things, the faster they wear out, but the opposite is true of the MacBook's battery. If you want to keep it healthy and working well you must use it as often as you can. Use it several times a week and it will last for years, but if you don't, the battery will fail. Run it down to empty too; this recalibrates it.

Activity Monitor

The Energy tab of Activity Monitor shows how much of a drain on the battery each app is placing. Scrolling live charts at the bottom show the energy requirement and battery charge over time



System Lens settings

System Lens works without any configuration, but if you want to customise the warning levels then you can by clicking the gear icon in the corner. Explore the settings and warning levels

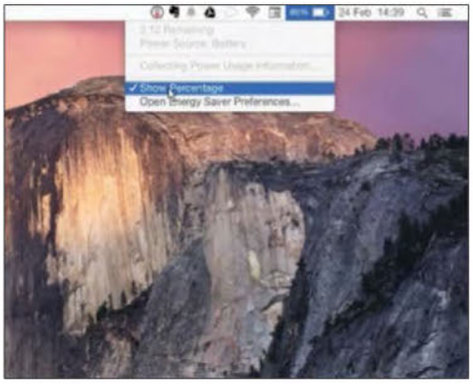
Animated icon

You can see the energy drain the system is imposing on the battery from the state of the System Lens icon in the menu bar at the top of the screen. Be aware of the red bars that indicate increasing usage

Close apps

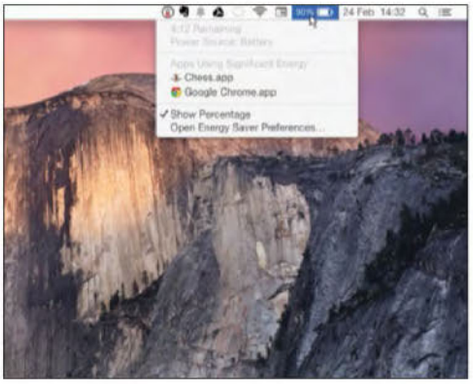
System Lens lists the apps using the most energy and provides an easy way to close them. It provides more information than the OS X battery indicator, and apps can also be closed

System Lens | Take control of energy saving



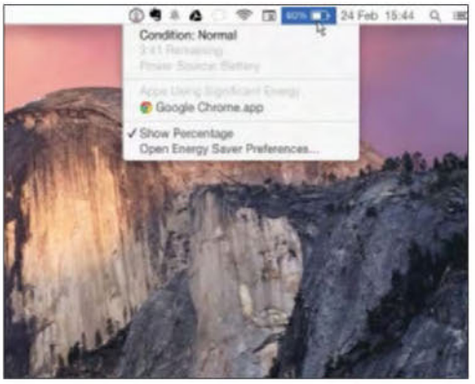
1: Check the percentage

Click the battery icon in the menu bar and make sure that Show Percentage is ticked. This provides a much better indication of the remaining charge than the icon alone.



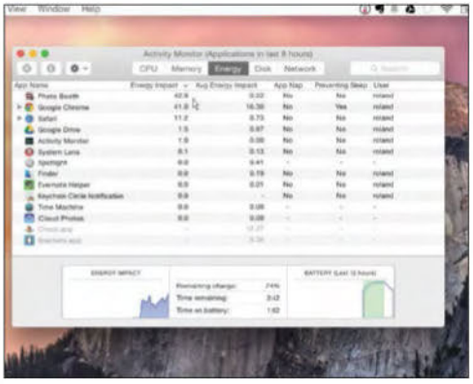
2: View the apps

You might sometimes see apps listed in the middle section of the menu and these are ones that are using a lot of energy. It is useful, but System Lens is better, as we will see.



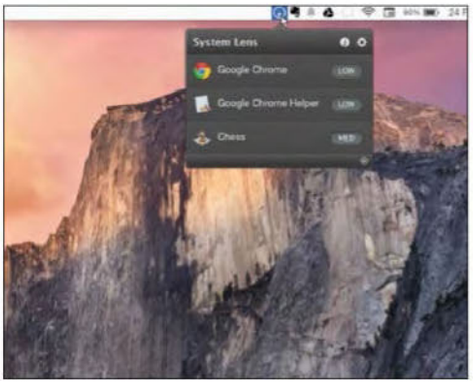
3: See the condition

Is the battery in good condition? How can you tell? One way to do this is to hold down the Alt key as you click the battery indicator in the menu bar. It should say Normal.



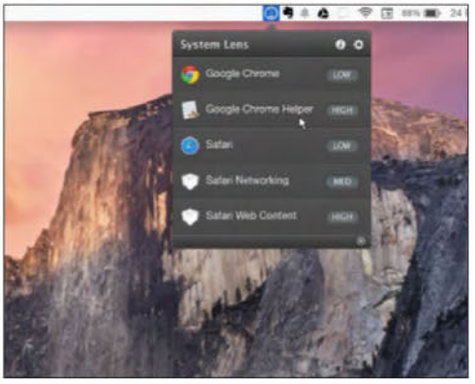
4: Use Activity Monitor

If you don't mind sifting through technical information, go to the Applications>Utilities folder and start Activity Monitor. The Energy tab lists apps and their energy usage.



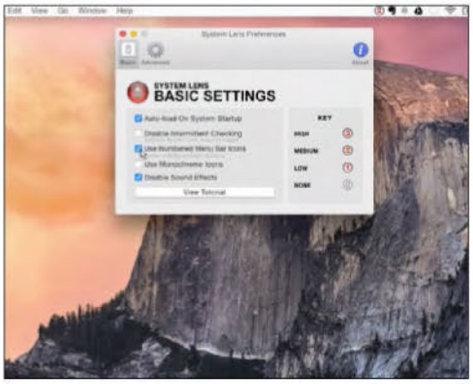
5: Use System Lens

System Lens adds an icon to the menu bar, and when it is clicked it displays a list of apps and indicates the energy usage with Low, Med and High displayed next to them.



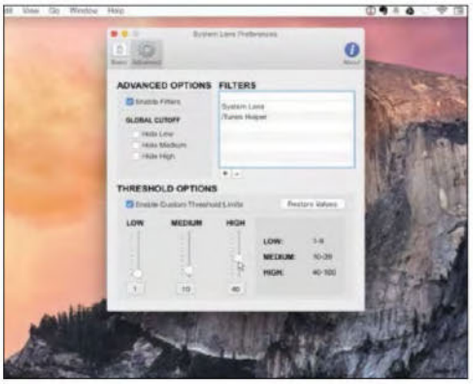
6: Watch the icon

Keep an eye on the icon. If it completely changes to red bars, it means that there are apps draining the battery. Click the icon to see the apps. There are two listed here.



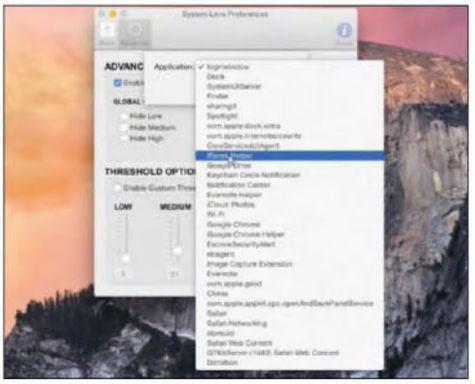
7: Customise System Lens

Click the System Lens icon and click the gear icon in the top-right corner. Instead of the default icon, numbers can be displayed to indicate the severity of the battery drain.



8: Set the threshold

Go to the Advanced tab at the top, tick Enable Custom Threshold Limits and drag all the sliders to the top. Now set the High, Medium and Low indicators in that order.



9: Ignore some apps

Apps with energy usage below the low threshold do not appear in System Lens. You can also hide apps by clicking the + under the Filters box and selecting one from the list.

Hacks

Unlock the full potential of your Mac

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Get up and running more quickly with these speedy tips

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Easily gather all the info you need without making a mess

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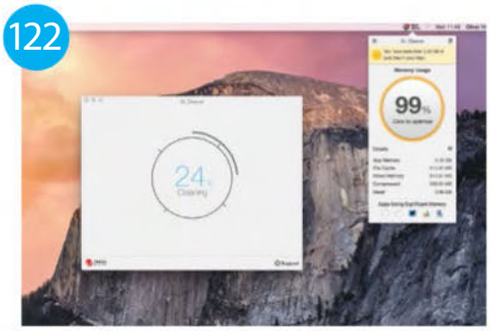
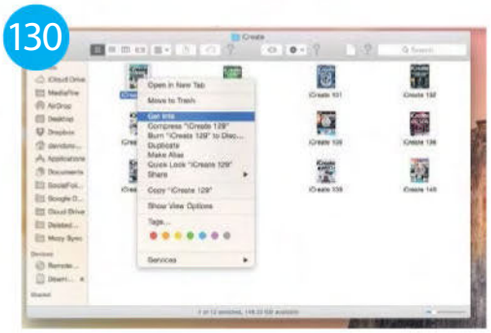
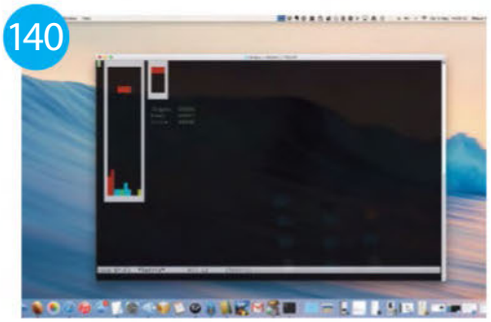
Free up space by discarded unnecessary image data







"Tinker with the workings of OS X"

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Ensure you're able to reinstall your OS in a crisis

"Tweak any Mac to your personal liking"

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Use your Mac as a screen capture device for your iPhone

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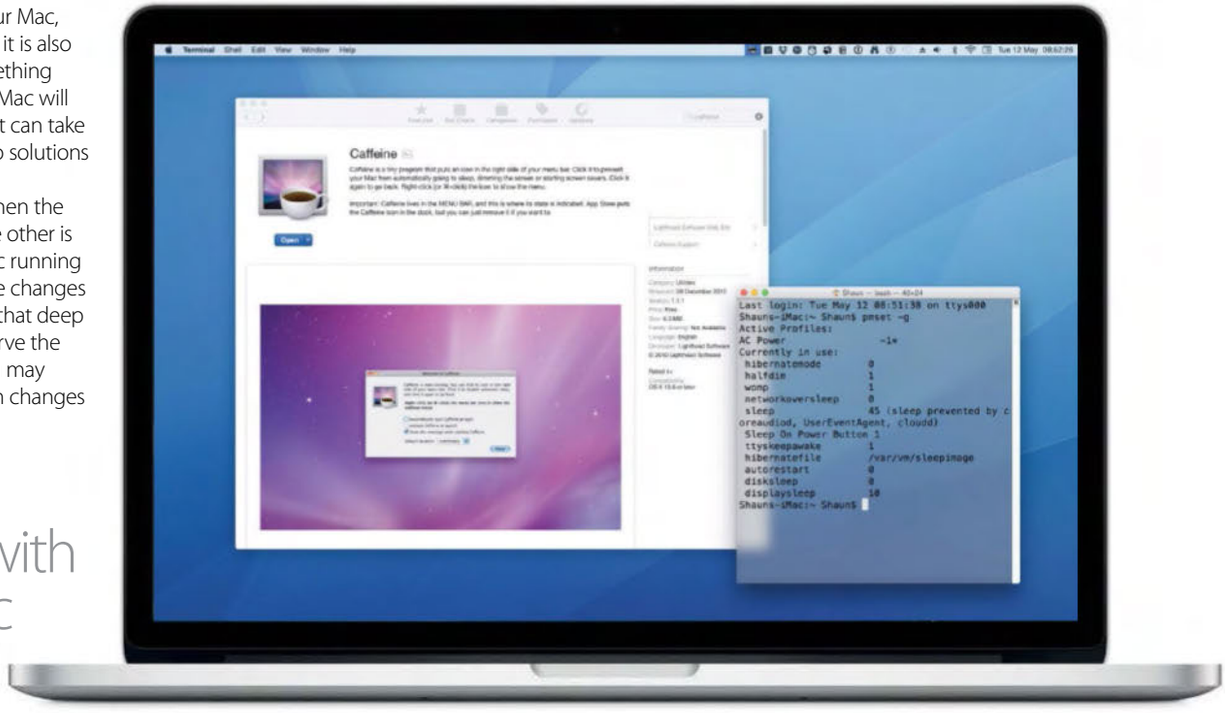
Reduce your Mac's wake-up time

You can speed up your Mac's wake-up time and make other minor adjustments to improve the overall startup experience

It is likely that when you turn on your Mac, there is a good reason to do so and it is also likely that you will need to get something done quickly. From normal sleep, a Mac will wake up immediately, but at times it can take a while and so we will offer you two solutions to this problem.

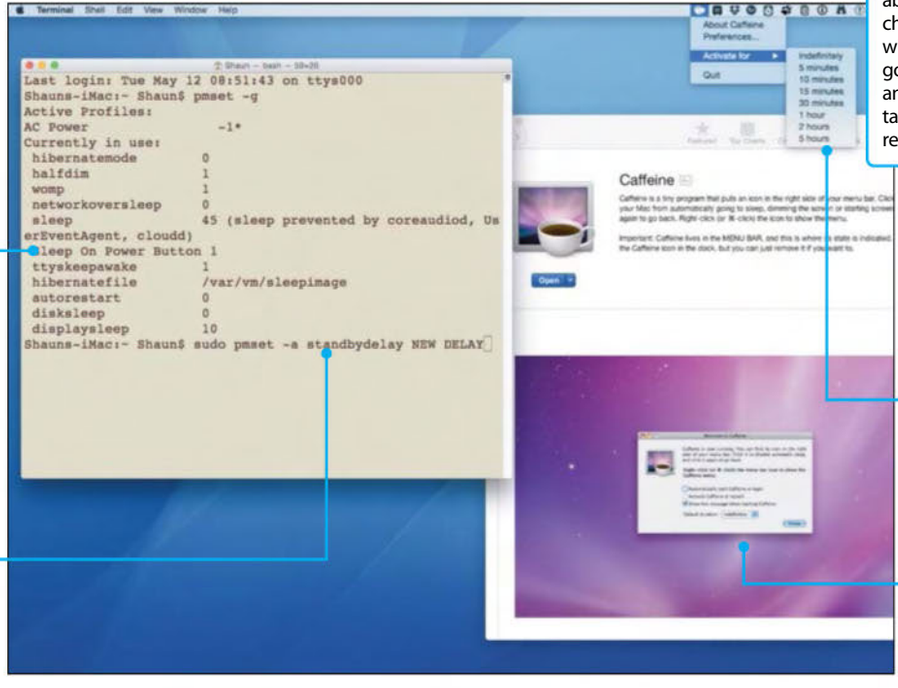
One lets you deal with exactly when the Mac goes into a deep sleep and the other is an app which lets you keep the Mac running for as long as you like. You can make changes as you work, but please remember that deep sleep is ultimately required to preserve the battery life of your MacBook, so you may want to consider the impact of such changes when away from home.



"One solution lets you deal with when the Mac goes to sleep"

Deal with Mac standby times

Two methods to achieve the same thing



Terminal does everything
As ever, if you take time to explore what Terminal can do, you have the ability to make changes that can greatly improve the way your Mac works for you

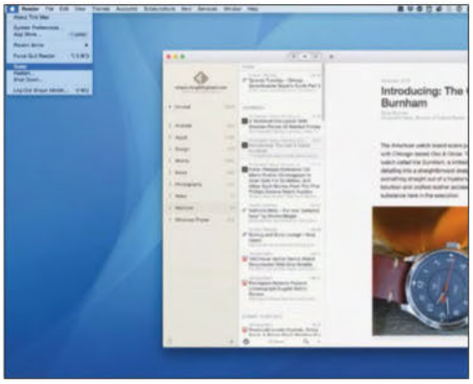
One commands
When a new version of Mac OS X is installed, such as Yosemite, the standby delay often gets reset to what Apple feels is best. You can change this back with one command

Sleep and slumber
Macs will go to sleep after a set period and you should usually be able to wake them up instantly. The changes we are offering here deal with the deep sleep that MacBooks go into in order to save battery life and these are the ones which can take a long time to wake up from, reducing your productivity.

Click to set
You can use Caffeine to change the period of inactivity required for sleep, from 5 minutes to indefinitely. Doing so may greatly affect the battery life on your MacBook Pro or MacBook Air, however

The app alternative
There are many apps which will stop you having to use Terminal and which will present similar controls in a more natural way. Caffeine is a very good example of this

Terminal | Speed up your Mac

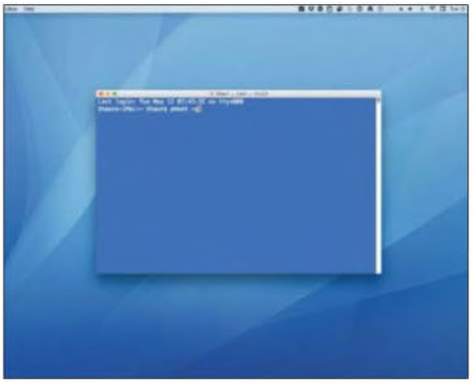


1: Slow waking up

You may have noticed that your MacBook can take a long time to wake up after it has entered sleep mode; this is due to the standby mode, which is designed to save battery power.

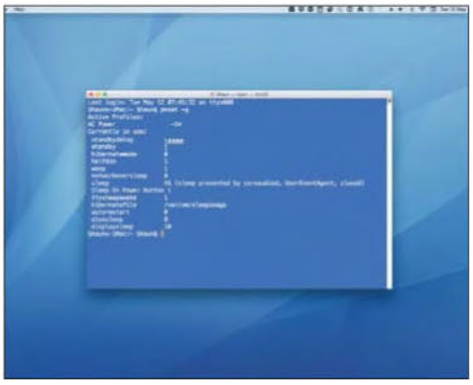
2: Open Terminal

There is a way, however, to check and reduce the time before your Mac goes to standby. To get started, go to the Utilities folder in Applications and open Terminal.



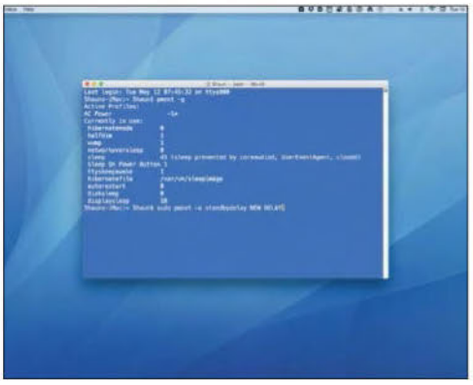
3: Check the time

In Terminal, type 'pmset -g', hit Enter and you will be presented with a list of variables which detail the parameters for certain Mac OS X activities. These are useful.



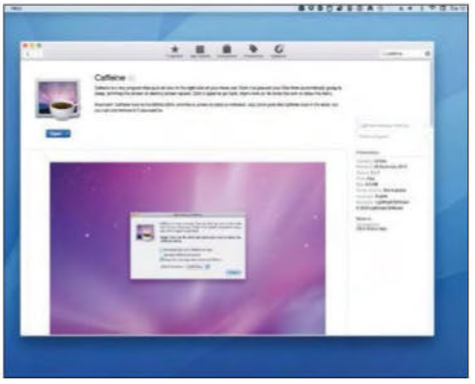
4: See the delay

Look for the 'standby delay' line, which is shown in seconds. For example, 10800 seconds = 3 hours, but do not expect to see this time on a desktop Mac as it's not needed.



5: Change the value

Input 'sudo pmset -a standbydelay' followed by the new required delay and the change will take effect immediately to reduce the time for your Mac to enter a deep slumber.

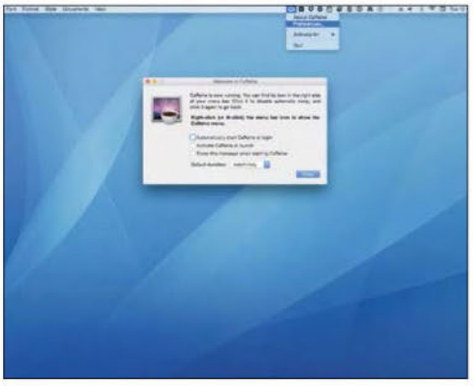


6: Stop standby altogether

If you are not concerned about battery life, head over to the Mac App Store and search for an app called Caffeine. This app lets you keep the Mac running how you like.

7: Install the app

Download and install the app in the normal way and it will be located in the standard Applications folder. Open it and a new icon will appear at the top, in the status bar.



8: Set your preferences

Right-click the status bar icon and click Preferences. You can now choose whether to enable Caffeine at launch, as well as setting the default duration to suit the way you work.

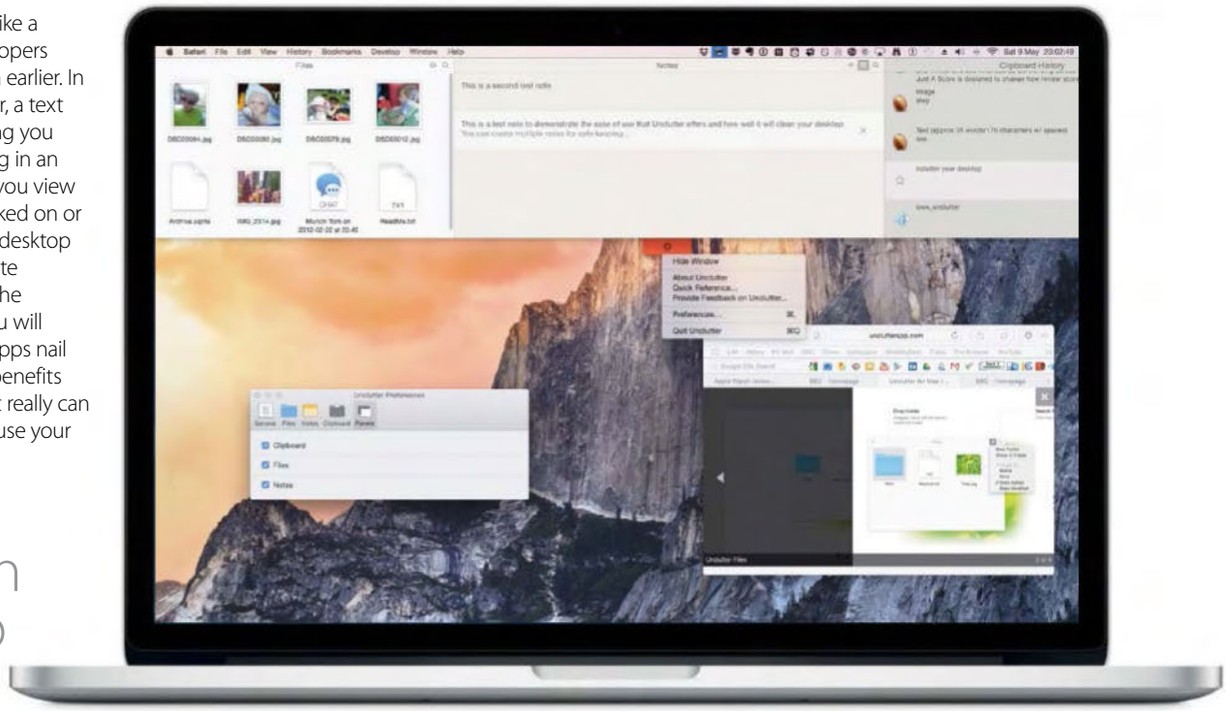
9: Choose a duration

Right-click the Caffeine icon again and hover over the 'Activate for' option. Choose one of the durations displayed, of which 'Indefinitely' is ideal for manual tweaking.

Tidy your desktop with the Unclutter app

Unclutter can help you gather together all of the text and media that you are currently working with

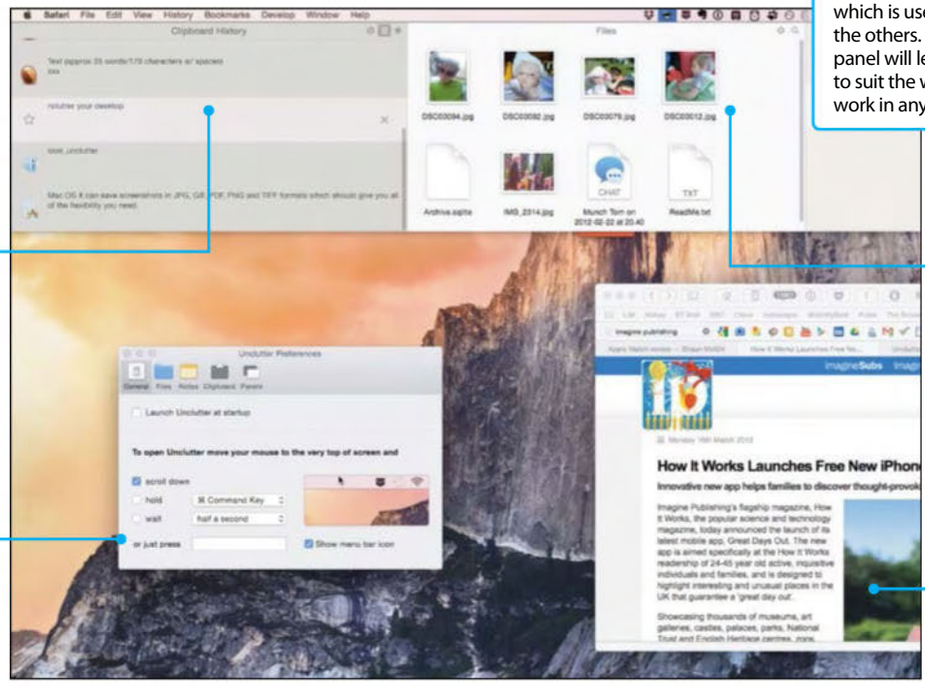
Unclutter is a new app which feels like a missed opportunity for those developers who did not come up with the idea earlier. In effect, it can take the place of Finder, a text editor and an image editor, by letting you quickly hide away any file or clipping in an instant. A simple command will let you view everything, which can then be worked on or saved as required. It cleans up your desktop in an instant and lets you concentrate on what needs to be done, safe in the knowledge that the information you will soon need is securely stored. Few apps nail the user interface, ease of use and benefits quite as well as Unclutter because it really can completely transform the way you use your Mac every day.



"It lets you concentrate on what needs to be done"

An unobtrusive solution

Store files, clips and text away from the desktop



In the background

Unclutter works in the background and will store all of your clips. Whether you copy images, text or anything else, Unclutter will keep a record so that you can jump straight back to them

Set it up

You can choose exactly how to launch Unclutter, using a command key combination or simply by scrolling down from the top of the screen. A delay can be set, from half a second to two seconds

Customise the panels

You can change the width of each panel by simply moving the line between them, which is useful if you use one more than the others. Also, clicking and holding a panel will let you drag it to a new position to suit the way you work. Unclutter can work in any way you want it to.

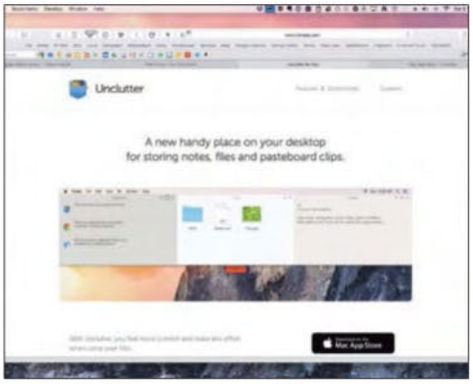
Dealing with files

Files can be dragged to the centre panel and stored together to immediately clean up your desktop. This helps greatly when focusing on a specific project which requires a lot of concentration

No limits

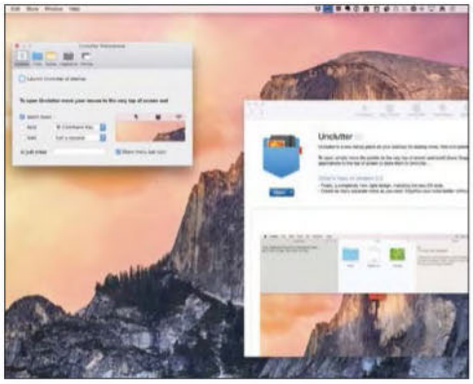
There really are no limits as to what Unclutter can work with. From web browsers to image apps to word processors, the app can be used to collect a vast array of information

Unclutter | Work with an uncluttered desktop



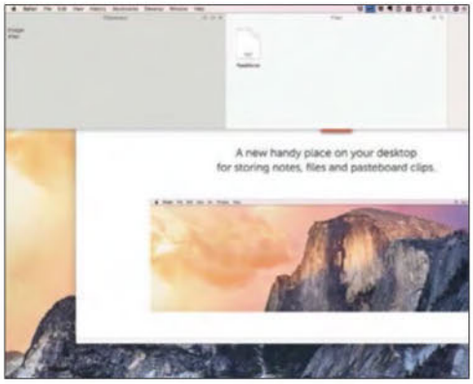
1: Download the app

Go to **unclutterapp.com** and follow the link to the download on the Mac App Store. The app is very good value considering the enormous amount of time it will save you daily.



2: Choose an enabler

Open the app, once downloaded, and then click the new icon in the Mac status bar. Now select Preferences and choose your preferred activation method in the General tab.

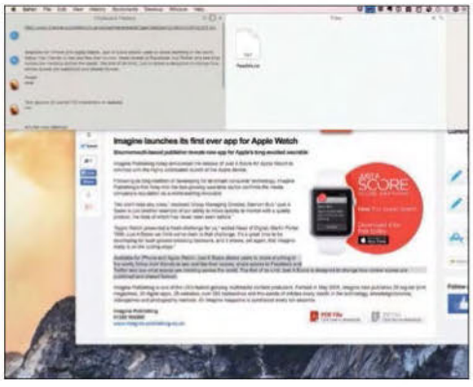


3: Show the panels

Go to the top of your desktop and use the activation method you selected in the second step to display the main Unclutter interface. Each panel should be blank initially.

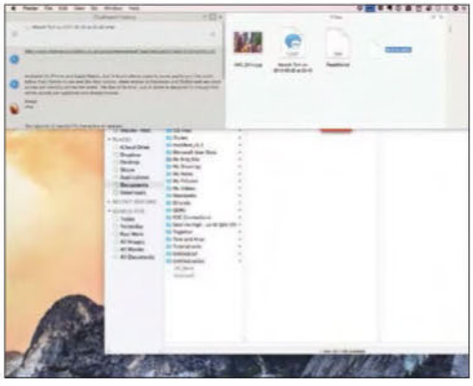
4: Use the clipboard

When you copy text or images, the Unclutter app will discreetly collect every piece of information. You will see no indicators at all that it is working in the background.



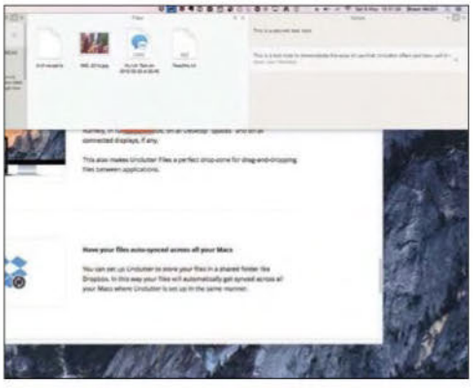
5: Your clipboard history

Open Unclutter and you will see your latest clip in the left-hand panel. Now click the middle icon at the top of the panel and your clipboard history will be displayed.



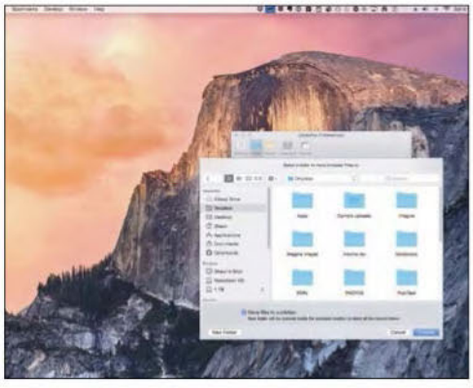
6: Uncluttered your files

To remove files from the desktop, click and drag them to the top of the screen. The Unclutter panels will immediately appear and you can drop them in the middle panel.



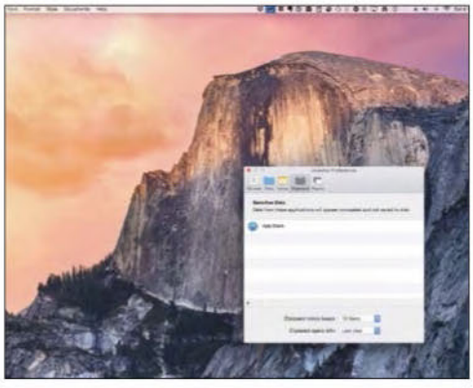
7: Write notes at anytime

To quickly jot down your thoughts or to capture a moment, open the Unclutter interface and start typing in the right-hand panel. Each note will be stored separately.



8: Multiple device files

To use your files on multiple devices, go to Preferences in Unclutter and select the Files option. Now choose 'Move To...' and select an online service like Dropbox.



9: Secure your data

Also in the Unclutter preferences, you can click the Clipboard option and then choose which apps will have their sensitive data concealed and not saved to disk.

Remove unwanted files with Dr. Cleaner

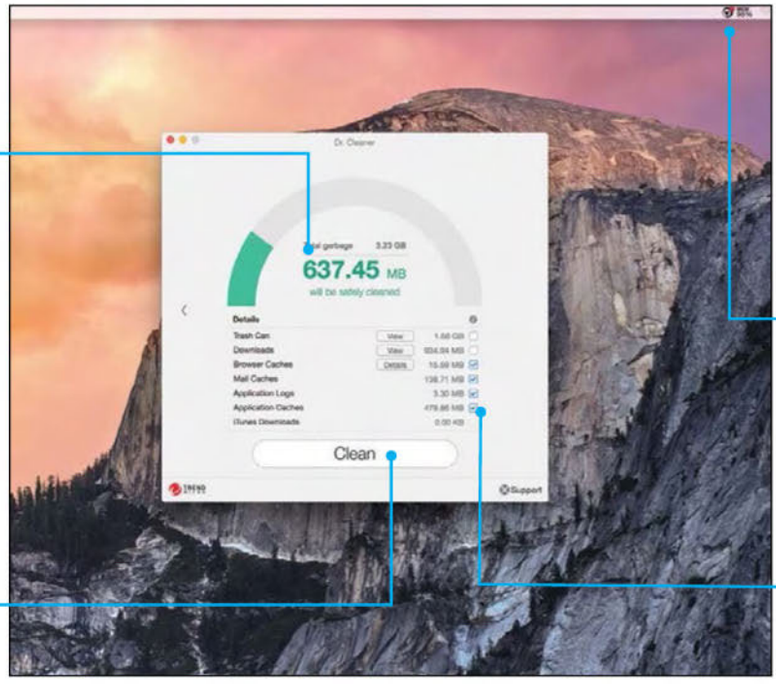
Permanently delete files from your Mac to optimise your hard drive's overall performance

There are a plethora of reasons why your Mac might be suffering from slowdown, but there's even more choice when it comes to fixing these sorts of issues. Choosing the correct app to help eradicate your lag issues is very important, and we recommend checking out the Dr. Cleaner app, which happens to be a completely free download from the Mac App Store. Through its simple interface, users can tailor all the files they want to move collectively, or let the app perform a full system removal of any files it deems expendable and thus freeing up some valuable room on your hard drive. So read on and we'll help you clear up your Mac's clutter with ease.

"Choosing the correct app eradicate lag issues is important"

Get rid of files

Navigate around the Dr. Cleaner app



How much can you save?

The initial scan will reveal how much memory you'll be able to save, but this number is customisable based on how many, or few, files you choose to delete

Start cleaning

Once you've fully configured the files you want to be removed, go ahead and press the Clean button. If you've got multiple files to remove, expect this process to take a while to complete

Be selective

If you decide that you want to remove your entire Trash can, make sure to first go through it and reinstate any files you'd prefer to keep by adding them to a different folder that the app isn't designated to clean. Once Dr. Cleaner has deleted them, you won't be able to access them afterwards.

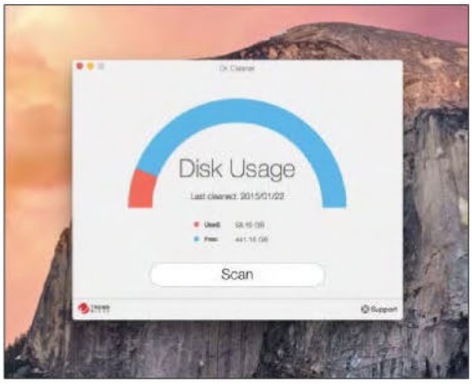
Further options

Use the toolbar icon to explore Dr. Cleaner's additional optimisation features, as well as the various settings to tinker with. The icon will be represented by how much of your RAM is currently being used

Select files

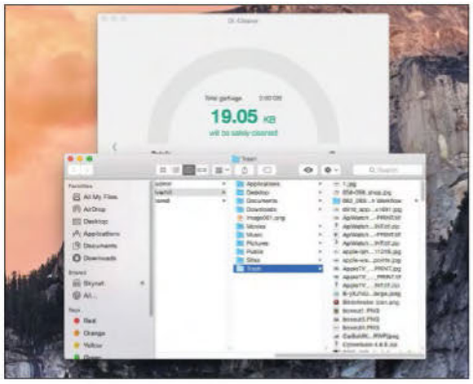
To pick individual files to delete, select the View option to take a closer look. Your directory of files will now appear, where you'll be able to choose the ones you want removed

Dr. Cleaner | Free up hard drive space



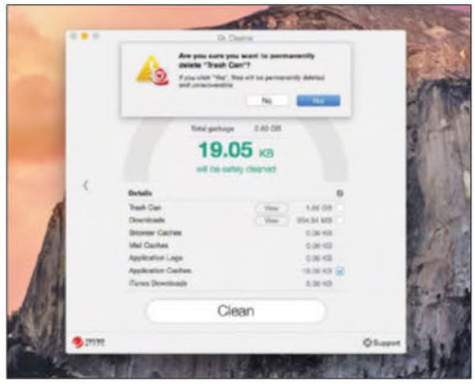
1: Perform a scan

When you first open up Dr. Cleaner, the app will perform a full scan of your hard drive to identify any sort of file that can be safely removed from your hard drive.



2: Take a closer look

An overview will now appear with the amount of space you can save. Use the checkboxes to select the individual files you want the app to permanently remove for you.

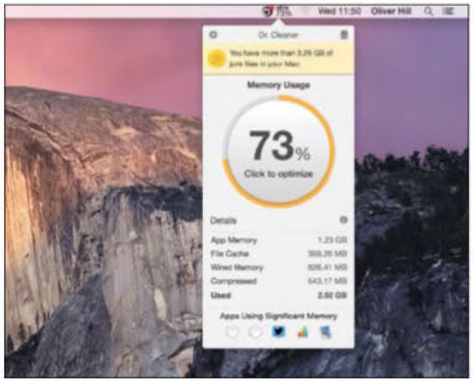


3: Confirm and remove

For certain files, you'll need to confirm the removal process within the app, so follow any prompts. Once everything has been confirmed the deleting process will begin.

4: Explore the app

While your hard drive is being cleansed, open the Dr. Cleaner app via the icon that sits on the toolbar of your Mac desktop. Here you'll be able to manage your RAM usage.



5: Optimise your RAM

If your memory usage is astonishingly high you should consider optimising to free up some space. Press the percentage button in the centre of the menu to complete this process.

6: Check app usage

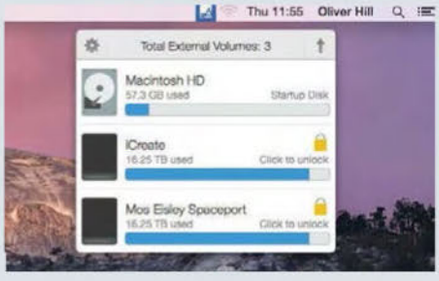
At the bottom of the menu you can check the apps that are using the most memory. Hover the cursor over each icon to get the exact number of megabytes of RAM they're using.

Free alternatives

Check out the App Store's offerings

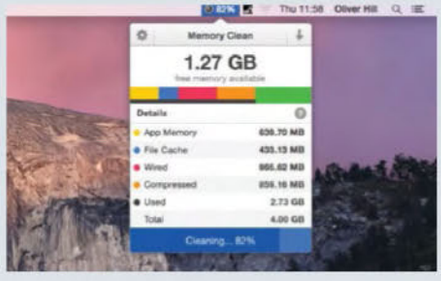
If Dr. Cleaner isn't the right fit for you or you fancy investigating something else, then there are a whole range of other options available to download from the Mac App Store. While there are some great paid options available, users need not spend a single penny on these types of apps. The free alternatives on the Mac App Store contain largely the same feature set as the paid options, and in certain cases, even include more. Here's a couple that we highly recommend.

"The free alternatives contain largely the same feature set as the paid"



Drive Clean

What makes Drive Clean a highly useful app is that it not only scans your hard drive, but also any external drives that are connected to it. This means it's a great way to clear up a cluttered USB stick.



Memory Clean

In terms of giving your Mac a quick boost, nothing comes close to the Memory Clean app. It'll identify files that are no longer in use and performs a scan that takes just a few seconds to fully complete.

Optimise your Mac's memory

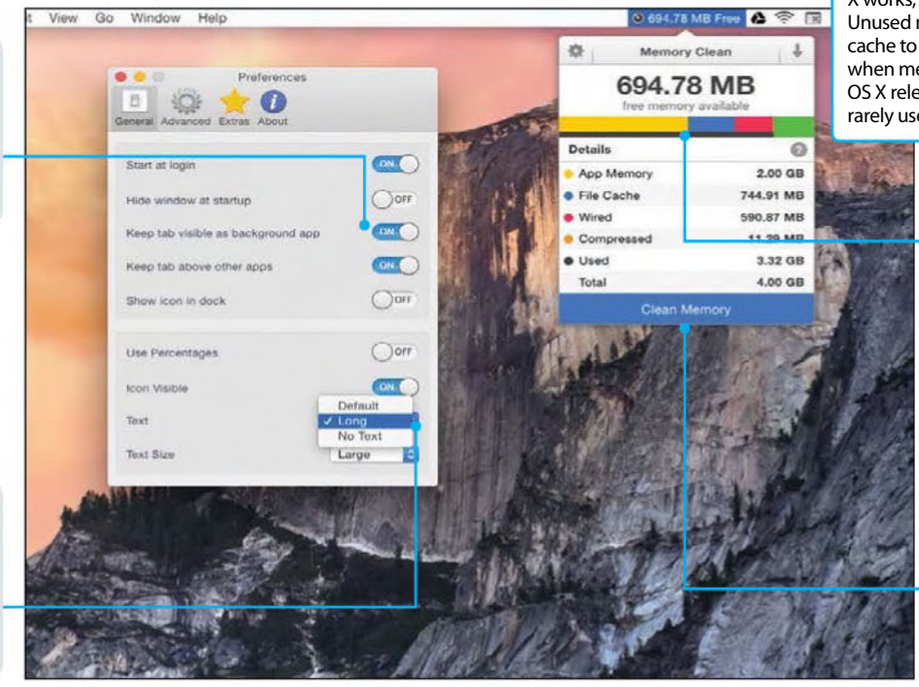
Use Memory Clean to purge inactive memory from your Mac and speed up productivity

The amount of memory in the Mac has an affect on its performance and the more you have, the better OS X runs. Upgrade the memory if you can, but if not, try a memory manager like Memory Clean. OS X does a great job of managing memory, but under some circumstances, it may be useful to force a clear out using this free app from the Mac App Store (**apple.co/1HRf1KY**). It works by forcing OS X to compress unused memory and reduce the file cache. On the one hand it makes switching to apps in the background slower, but on the other hand it frees up a lot of space so you can then run a large memory-hungry new app. This may help the Mac to run faster.

"Free up space so you can run a large, memory-hungry new app"

Get to know Memory Clean

A guided tour of the most important features



Keep tab visible

This setting enables the app to change from a drop-down item on the menu bar to an app that has its own window that can be dragged around the screen and positioned anywhere

Customise the display

The menu bar display can be customised in two ways. There are Default (short), Long text displays and none. The text size can be large or normal. Set these as you prefer

Help! I've no memory!

Don't panic if Memory Clean reports low free memory. It is just the way OS X works; it's not really out of memory. Unused memory is put to use as a file cache to speed up app switching, but when memory is needed to run apps, OS X releases it. It also compresses rarely used memory, too.

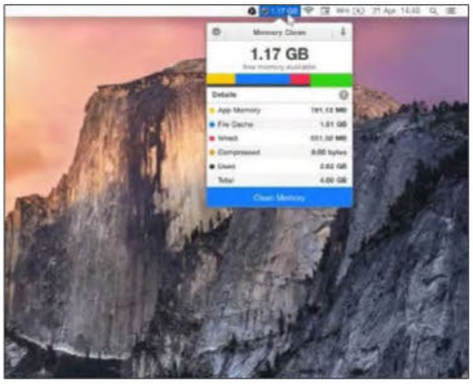
Memory display

This is not simply decoration; this bar represents your Mac's memory. Each colour shows each type of memory use and the meaning of each colour is displayed in the list below

Clear the memory

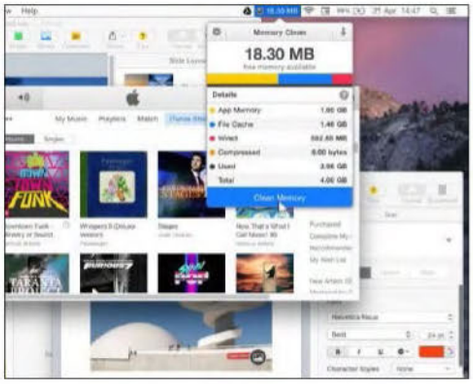
Click the Clean Memory button to clear the memory and free up space for running a large app. Clicking it again and even a third time has benefits and more memory is made free

Memory Clean | Clear memory, configure your options



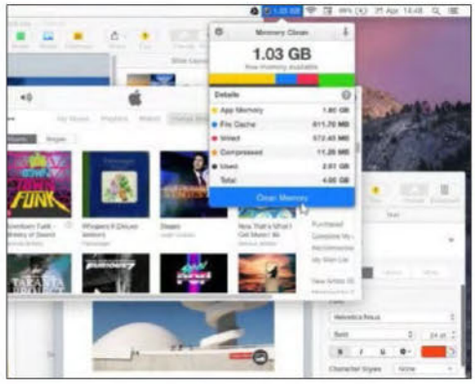
1: Check the memory

The amount of free memory is displayed in the menu bar. Click it to open this panel that shows the memory usage in detail. The large figure at the top is the important one.



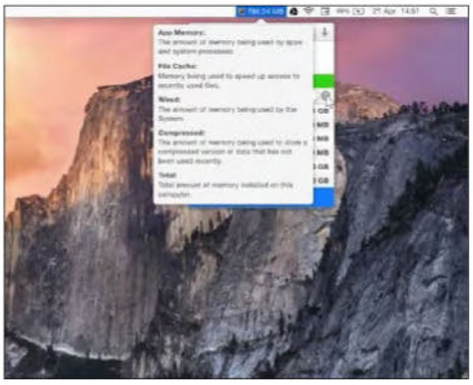
2: Load some apps

As you open app after app, the amount of free memory falls. Click the menu bar item to open the panel and check the amount of memory left. It has fallen to just 18.3MB.



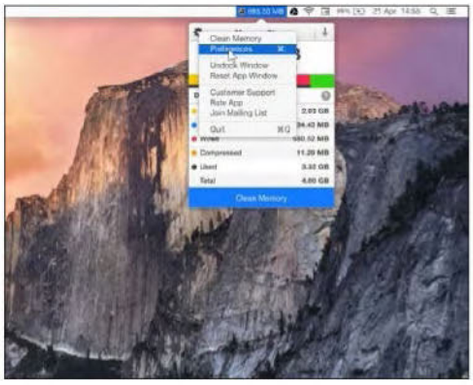
3: Clear the memory

Click the Clean Memory button at the bottom and the amount of free memory increases enormously. This could be useful, for example if you wanted to run a very large app.



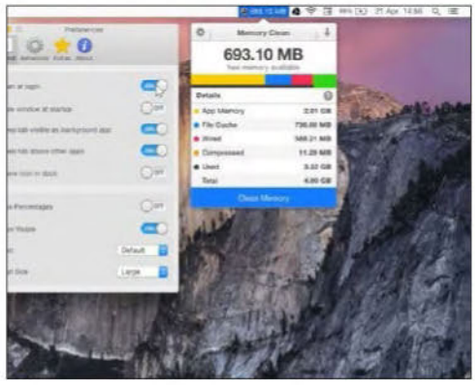
4: Help with memory

Memory in the Mac is used in many different ways and if you find the information in the Memory Clean panel confusing, there are brief explanations of each type. Click the ? button.



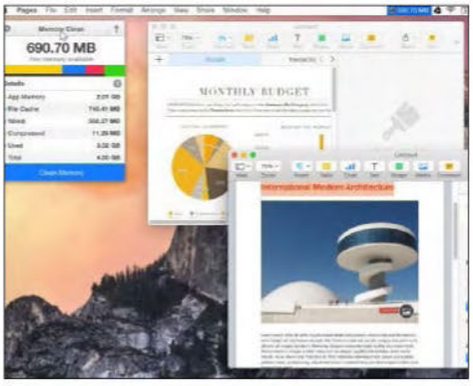
5: Access the menu

Click the gear in the Memory Clean panel or Ctrl-click the menu bar display to access the menu. There is a Quit option at the bottom, but ignore that and click Preferences.



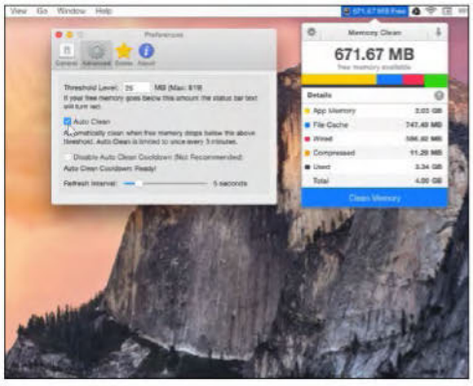
6: Configure the options

There are several useful options and the first one automatically starts Memory Clean when the Mac starts. Turn on the third and fourth options to keep the app on the screen.



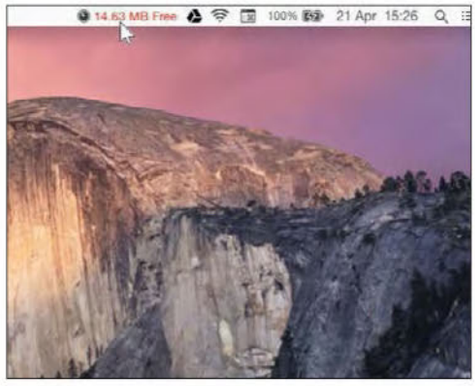
7: Undock Memory Clean

Close the Preferences and click the down arrow in Memory Clean's window. Drag it and drop it anywhere you like on the screen. It is useful if you want it permanently visible.



8: Set Auto Clean

Return to Preferences and select Advanced. Turn on Auto Clean, set the Threshold Level, which is when automatic cleanup is triggered. Try it on and off to see which is best.



9: Triggering a cleanup

When memory dips below the threshold, the memory indicator in the menu bar turns red and this triggers an automatic cleanup if the option is set in the Advanced Preferences.

Use Hazel to automate housekeeping

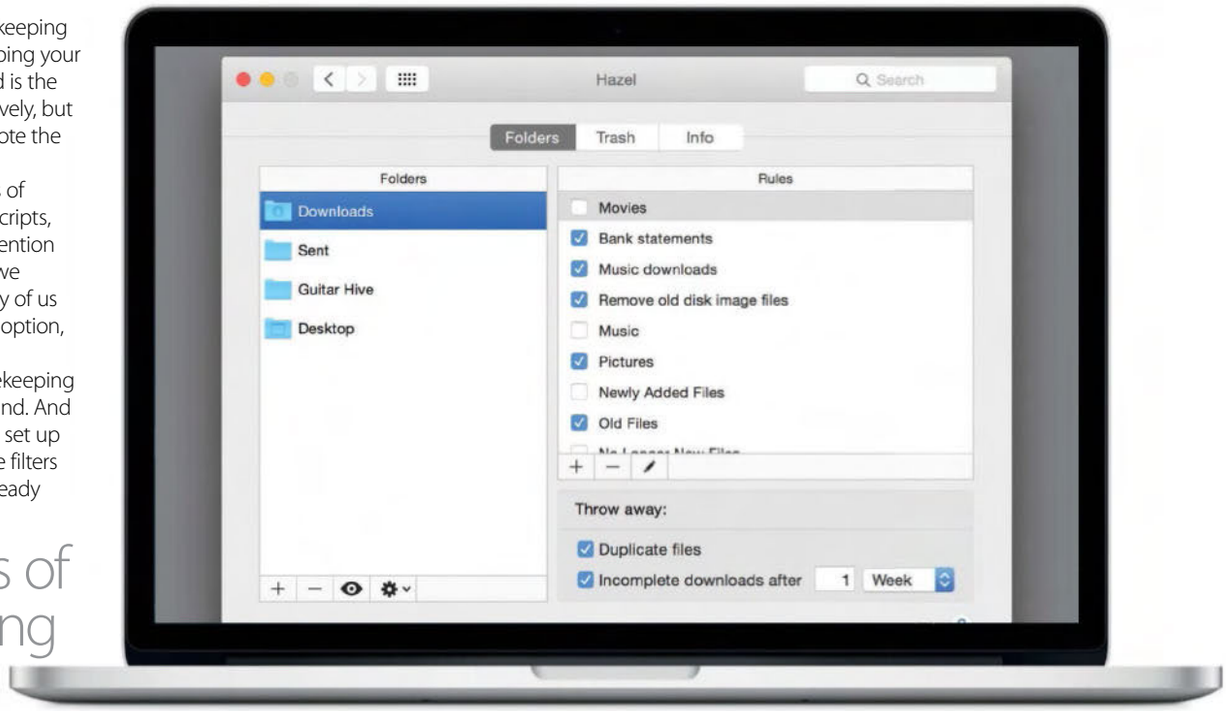
Hazel allows you to create rules which run on folders to automatically carry out housekeeping jobs on your Mac

There's no getting around it: housekeeping is boring. Most of us know that keeping your Mac uncluttered and well organised is the key to using it happily and productively, but we just can't bring ourselves to devote the time to do it.

There are ways to automate tasks of course, using Automator or Apple Scripts, or a combination of the two. But mention Automator to most Mac users and we turn pale. And AppleScript has many of us running for the hills. There is a third option, however: Hazel.

Hazel can automate lots of housekeeping tasks and run them in the background. And the good news is that if you've ever set up a Smart Playlist in iTunes or used the filters in the Finder's search box, you're already halfway to learning how to use it.

"Automate lots of time-consuming tasks"



Hazel's main window

The starting point in Hazel

Folders
This list shows all the folders for which rules have been created. You are able to apply multiple rules to the same folder

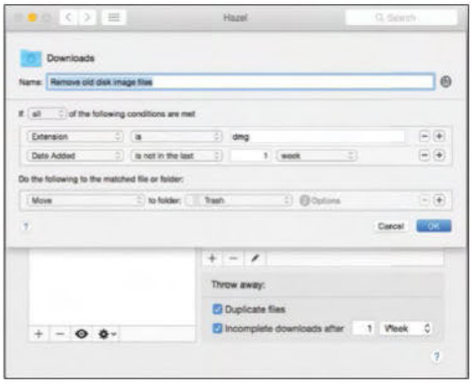
Editing rules
As well as toggling rules relating to the selected folder on and off, you can edit them, delete them, or add new ones

Rules, Conditions and Actions
Rules are applied to a specific folder, running when anything is added to it. Conditions are the checks made by the rule to identify whether it should run. Actions are the things you tell Hazel to do to a file in the folder.

Trash
This tab displays a list of pre-created rules for the Trash. These include deleting files fully if they've been for a certain period

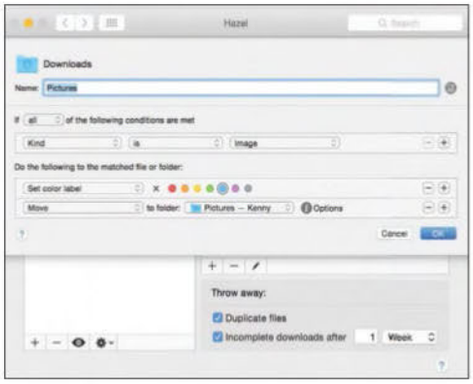
Rules
When you click on a folder, a list of the rules created for it is shown here. Tick the box to the left of a rule name to toggle it on or off

Hazel | Get to grips with Hazel



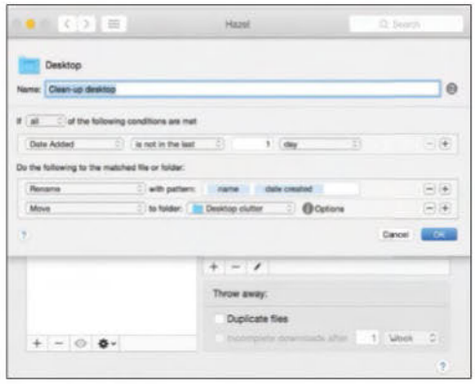
1: Understanding Hazel

Before you use Hazel, you need to know how. Open it from its Finder menu item, click on a rule in the right window, then click the pencil icon at the bottom. That will display the rule.



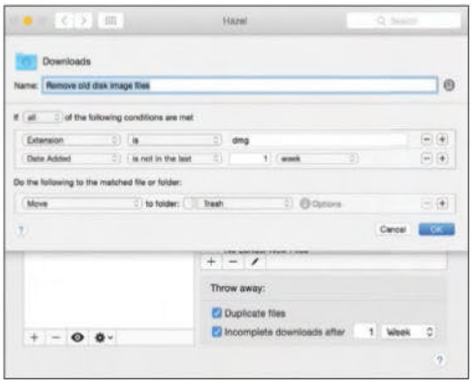
2: Pre-made rules

Repeat step one for each of the rules in the list and examine what each one does and discover whether there are any which you think would be useful; if so, tick the box next to it.



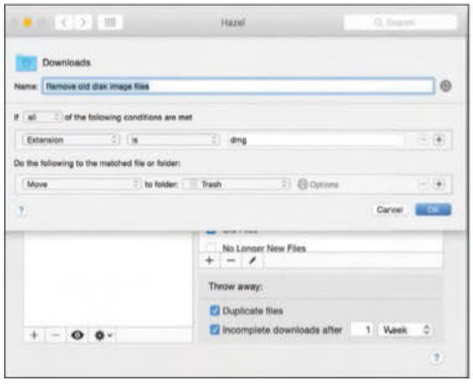
3: Clean up your desktop

In the Folders window, click '+' and select Desktop as the folder. Click '+' in Rules and set 'Date added is not in the last 1 day.' Set action to 'Move' and choose a folder to move files to.



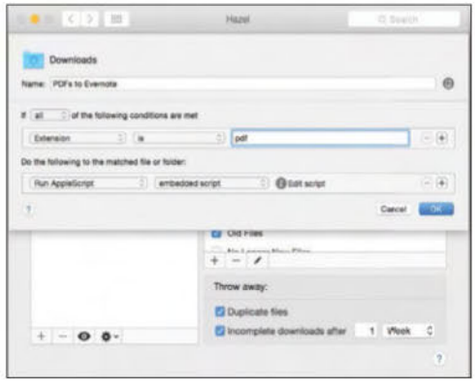
4: Dump disk images 1

To ditch old disk image files, click on Downloads, and '+' at the bottom of the Rules window. Give your rule a name, then set If to 'all' and the first condition to 'extension is dmg.'



5: Dump disk images 2

Add a second rule and choose 'date added is not in the last 1 week.' Set the action to 'Move to folder Trash.' All disk images in the Downloads folder for a week will be trashed.



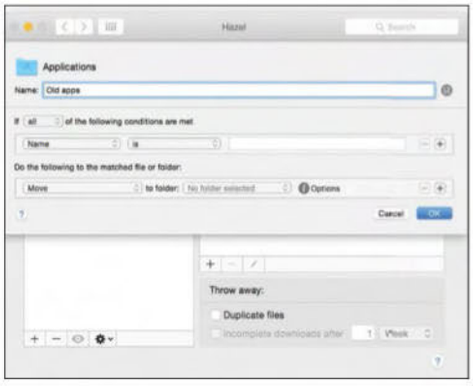
6: Add PDFs to Evernote 1

Select Downloads as the folder in the Folders window. Click '+' to add a Rule that says 'If extension is PDF' and set the Action to 'Run AppleScript embedded script'.

7: Add PDFs to Evernote 2

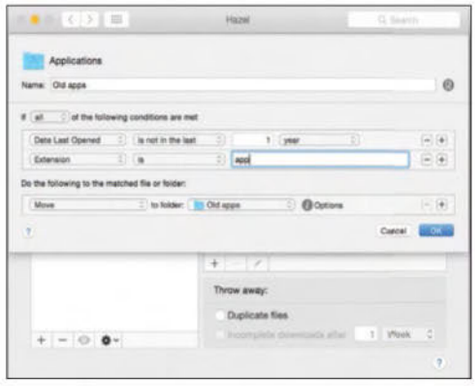
In the scripts window, type:

```
tell application "Evernote"
    activate
    create note from file theFile
end tell
```



8: Move old apps 1

Create a new folder called Old Apps. In Hazel, create a new Rule, with Applications as the folder. Set If to 'all'. Add a Condition, 'Date opened is not in the last year.'



9: Move old apps 2

Add another Condition: 'Extension is app'. Set the Action to 'Move file to folder' and choose the folder Old Apps. Now, any apps you haven't opened for a year will be archived.

Save vital space with CleanMyMac 3

Give your Mac a spring clean and a performance boost with one of our favourite utility apps

The latest edition of the acclaimed software, CleanMyMac 3 has once again showed itself to be a fine utility app for any Mac user. It's an all-in-one solution for giving your Mac an MOT and keeping it clean and healthy. Like any machine you use over and over again, your Mac gets clogged up with junk. Most of the time you don't even know it's there, grinding your Mac slowly to a halt, and that's where an app like CleanMyMac 3 comes in. One of its key selling points is just how simple it is to use. In this tutorial we're going to walk you through how to Smart Cleanup your Mac, saving precious hard disk space in the process. It's not the most exciting task in OS X, but it is very important to do it once a month at least.

"It's an all-in-one solution for giving your Mac an MOT and keeping it clean"

View system performance

Use the Dashboard feature to keep a close eye on your Mac

Free Up

This nifty feature enables you to free up some RAM and help your Mac run more smoothly. Perfect for anyone running pro-level, high-intensity applications that clog up your memory

Totalling up

CleanMyMac keeps a running total of the amount of space you've saved since you first downloaded the app. You'll be amazed at how much this total rises over time

Menu bar widget

CleanMyMac 3 also has a presence up in OS X's main menu bar. This widget-like feature gives you a similar overview to Dashboard, detailing available space on your hard disk and the amount of memory currently being used. Functionality is limited to freeing up RAM and emptying your Trash, but there is the option to load up the full app from the drop-down menu.

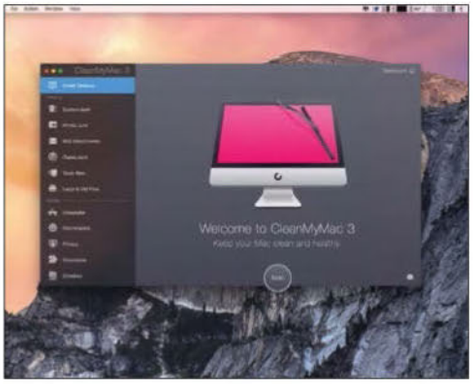
Available space

CleanMyMac is baked into OS X and your Mac, and as a result tells you how much space you have available. It breaks down your usage into different, colourful sections

Processor

A quick and easy way to see in real time how much strain your processor is under. You'll still need Activity Monitor to get more detail, but this gives you an at-a-glance overview

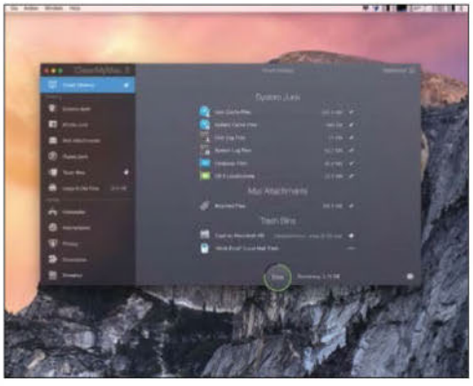
CleanMyMac 3 | Spring clean your Mac



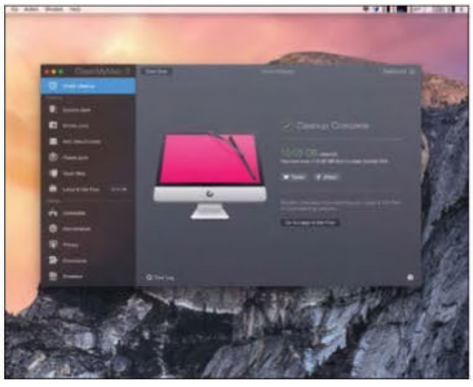
1: Welcome
When you first open up the app you'll be presented with this main screen. With the Smart Cleanup menu selected in the option sidebar, press the circle Scan button.

2: Scanning
CleanMyMac begins to scan for junk. There's a nice visual display of what the app is searching and a grand total at the bottom. You can press Stop at any time you want.

3: Overview
It may take a few minutes, but the app then gives a final total that is Ready for Safe Cleanup, breaking the total into six categories. If you're comfortable, click on the Clean circle.



4: Cleanup
CleanMyMac gets going, doing all the dirty work for you, clearing system junk and trash. Once again, you're shown what's happening and the location of what's being deleted.



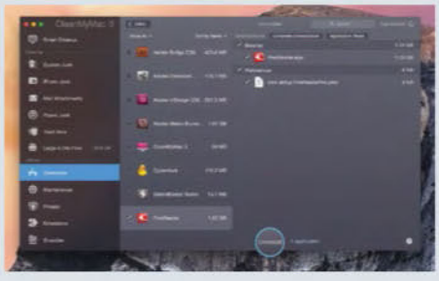
5: Complete
It won't be long before you've officially saved vital hard disk space. You're shown how much space is now free on your disk and given the chance to tweet or Facebook the results.

6: Old files
If you want to go further, select the Go to Large & Old Files option to reclaim even more space. You can go through these files individually, select them and Remove.

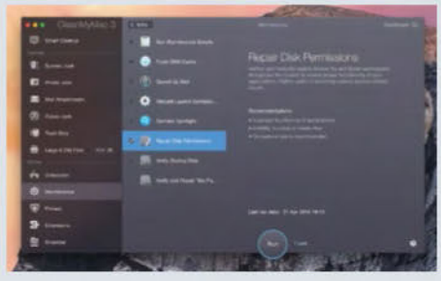
Utilities
Discover more cleaning features

Scanning your hard disk is a critical part of CleanMyMac 3, and you'll use its clean-up tool on a regular basis. But this app isn't a one-trick pony by any stretch of the imagination, perhaps not surprising given its pretty hefty price tag. Underneath the Cleaning section lives a selection of utility features that similarly help to keep your Mac clean and tidy. We're taking a closer look at two of them here, Uninstaller and Maintenance to the right, detailing how they work and why they are useful.

"There's more than meets the eye in CMM3"



1: Uninstaller
When you try to manually uninstall an app, it often fails to get rid of it completely. The Uninstaller option will ensure everything, from stray binaries and leftover preferences, is deleted from your Mac.



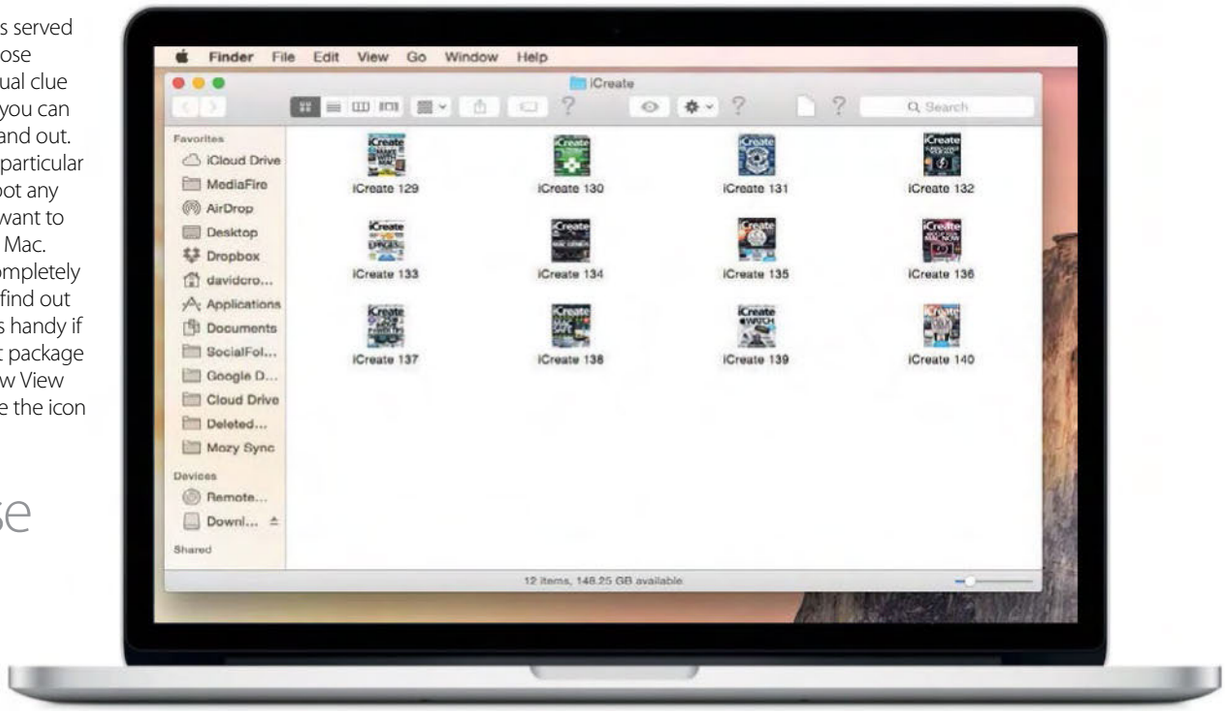
2: Repair Disk Permissions
CleanMyMac 3's Maintenance folder holds a wealth of powerful features, including the ability to Repair Disk Permissions. Select and click Run and the app will verify and repair broken file and folder permissions in OS X.

Add custom folder icons in OS X

Don't stick with the Mac's boring blue folders: pretty them up using icons of your own

Do you find the icons that Apple has served up rather uninspiring, particularly those generic blue folders that give no visual clue as to what lies beneath? Thankfully, you can change them, allowing folders to stand out. This is great if you are working on a particular project and you want to instantly spot any folders that relate to it or if you just want to provide some visual flourish to your Mac.

The actual size of icon needed completely depends on your Mac's settings. To find out the current size of an icon – which is handy if you are creating your own in a paint package – go to Finder and select View>Show View Options. You will then be able to see the icon size. In our case they are 48x48.



"Spice up those generic blue folders with custom icons"

Using the Iconator app

Want some ready-made icons and a way to get them? The Iconator app in the Mac App Store may be the answer

Drag folder in

We've decided we want to try something different to our magazine cover as an icon. In Iconator you drag your folder into the box in the lower left-hand corner of the app box

Settings

Tapping the cog icon shows you a couple of settings. One allows you to call up the app using a keyboard shortcut and the other lets you launch it at login

Using existing icons

Is there an icon on an existing file or folder that you like the look of? Copy it to another file or folder. Right-click and choose File>Get Info before going to the top of the window, highlighting the desired icon and selecting Edit>Copy. Now open the file or folder that you want to use it on and again right-click, choosing Get Info. Click the icon and select Edit>Paste.

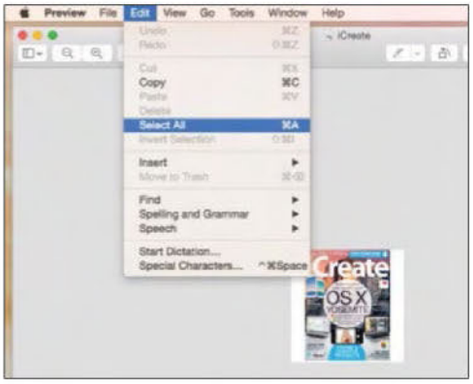
Scroll bar

Use the scroll bar on the side of the Iconator screen to find an app that you want to replace the current one with. Once you have found the one you want, highlight it

Apply or Revert

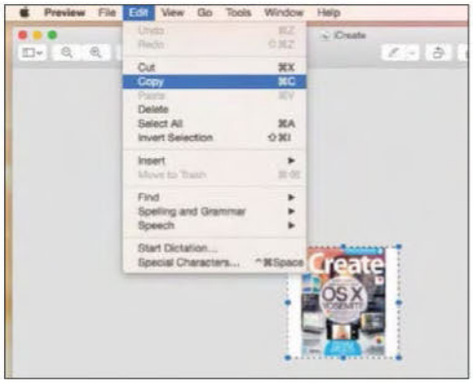
When you have hit upon the right icon for you, simply click Apply. Or, if you decide that you don't want it after all, then click Revert to go back to the original icon

Finder | Creating custom icons for folders



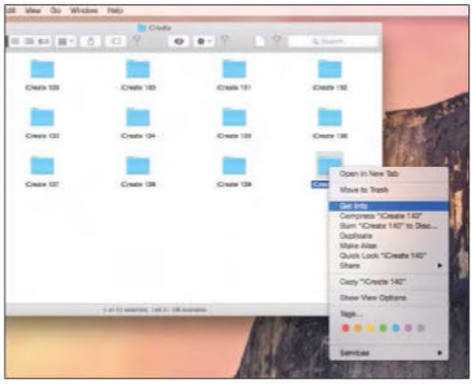
1: Find an image

Look for an image you wish to use. You can create one yourself in a paint package; look on the web or use one from your hard drive. Open it in Preview. Go to Edit>Select All.



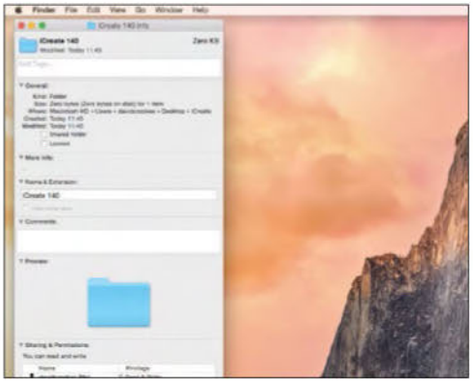
2: Copy the image

With your image highlighted, you need to copy it. You do this by going to Edit>Copy in Preview. The image you want to use is now saved within the Clipboard on your Mac.



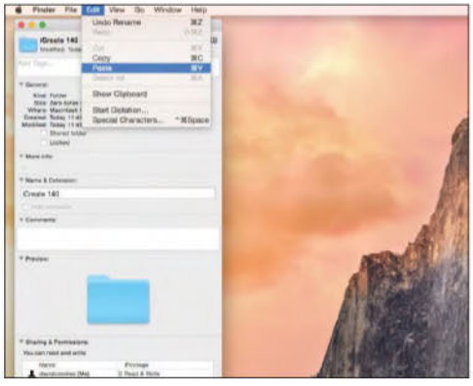
3: Go to folder

Select the folder whose icon you want to replace and right-click it. In our case, we are replacing the icons of our work folders with a magazine cover. Select Get Info.



4: Select current icon

In the top left-hand corner you will see the current icon that is being used by the folder (by default all folders are blue). Simply highlight this icon by clicking on it.

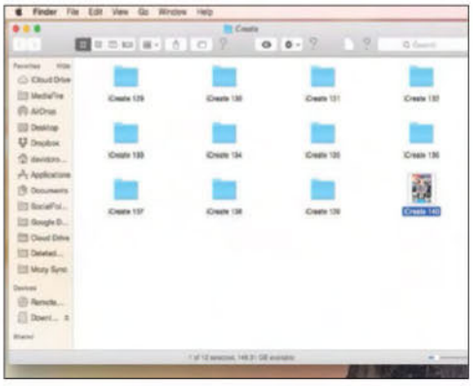


5: Paste new icon

Now go to Edit and select the option for Paste or press Command+V. This will replace the generic blue folder with the image that you have previously highlighted and copied.

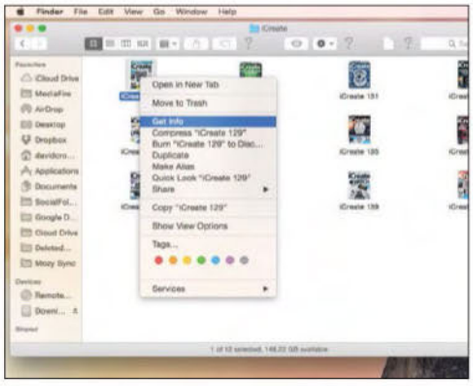
6: See the Preview

Assuming that the Paste command went without a hitch, you should see exactly how the new icon will look in a larger form by looking at the Preview section within Get Info.



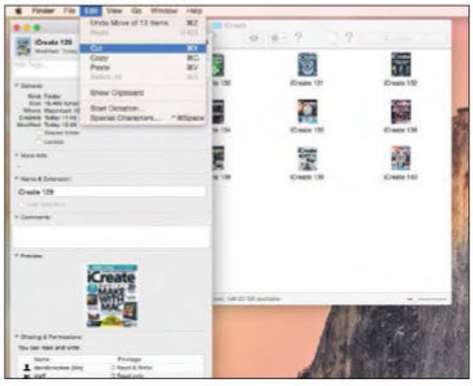
7: View as folder

You will now see that the folder in your Finder window has changed. You can continue doing this with all of your icons, ensuring that, at first glance, you know their content.



8: Remove image

If you later decide that an image does not look quite the way you want it to, you can easily remove it. Right-click on the offending folder and select the Get Info option.



9: Cut it away

Click the unwanted image in the very left-hand corner of the Get Info window and go to Edit and Cut. The image will be removed and the blue folder will be restored.

Find anything on your Mac

Master your Mac's powerful search tool Spotlight to track down files, emails, images and more

Ever spent hours trawling through your inbox looking for an important email, or rooting through folder after folder trying to find a crucial document, which you know is somewhere but can't remember where – or what you called it?

Fortunately, your Mac has a powerful search tool called Spotlight, which can find just about anything on your computer, even if you can't remember what you named the file or the email subject line.

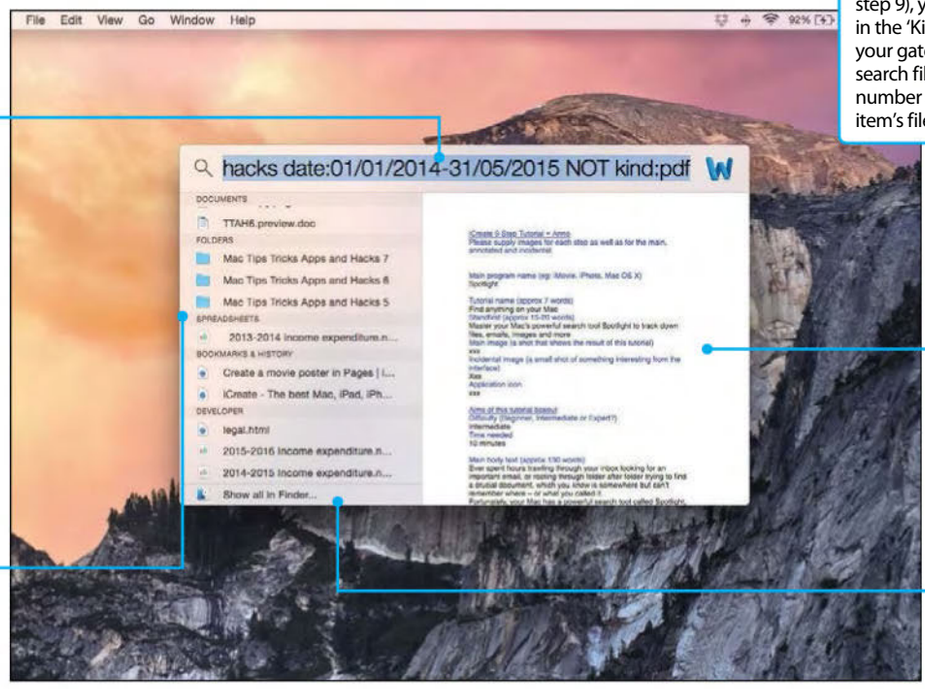
Spotlight's power lies in its ability to search within documents, emails, Messages conversations and the like, but also its ability to narrow down your search results, based on a huge variety of variables.

We're going to show you some of Spotlight's advanced and little-known features – once you master them, you'll be able to find anything on your Mac.

"You'll be able to find anything"

Spotlight search

Navigate and refine your results



Your search term
This is what you're looking for. Here, we've refined our search using the 'date:' and a Boolean option to help narrow it down

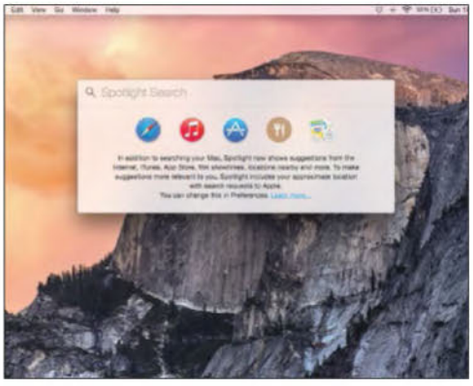
Results preview
Search results are grouped by kind. Click an item to preview it on the right, or click it and press Cmd+Enter to open the folder it's in

Advanced filtering
When you view your search results in Finder and choose to refine them (see step 9), you'll see an 'Other…' option in the 'Kind:' drop-down menu. This is your gateway to a long list of advanced search filters: everything from the number of layers in an image file to an item's file extension.

Item preview
Select a file in your search results to preview it here. Hover over the preview of an audio or video file to play it

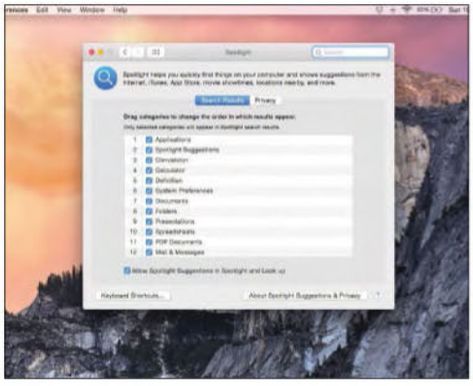
Show in Finder…
Double-click to open a Finder window with all your results shown. From there you can refine further or save the search

Spotlight | Master Spotlight's little-known features



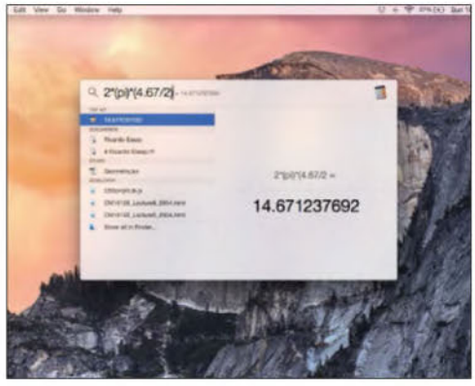
1: Launching Spotlight

Launch Spotlight by pressing Cmd+space bar or clicking the magnifying glass in the top right of your screen. You can launch the search in Finder (see step 8) with Alt+Cmd+space bar.



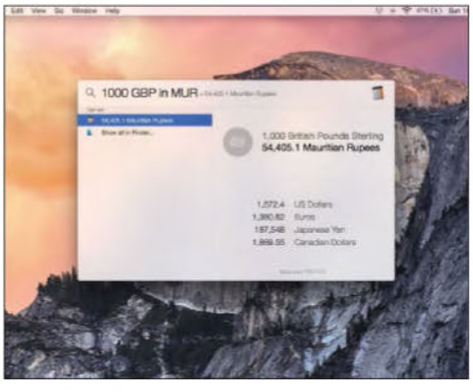
2: What to include or exclude?

Spotlight can be set to include or exclude certain things. In System Preference>Spotlight, untick anything you'd like excluded. Now click Privacy and drag in any folders you'd like to exclude.



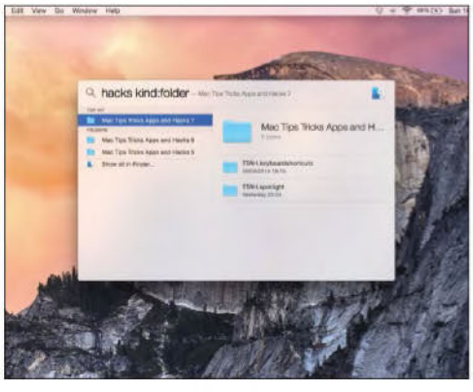
3: Instant calculator

Spotlight is an advanced calculator: just type your sum into the search bar. This works for simple arithmetic, as well as more complicated calculations using brackets, powers, logs and more.



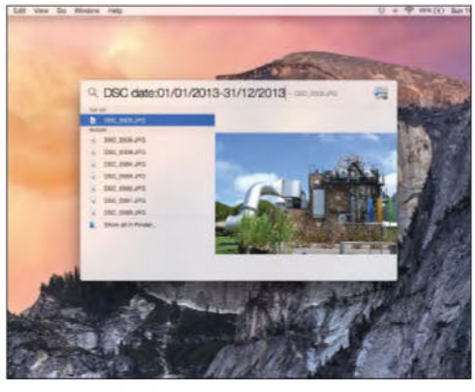
4: Convert currency

Convert between a number of different currencies using the syntax <AMOUNT> <CURRENCY> in <CURRENCY> – eg '100 us dollars in euro', or use the ISO 4217 currency codes: '150 GBP in EUR'.



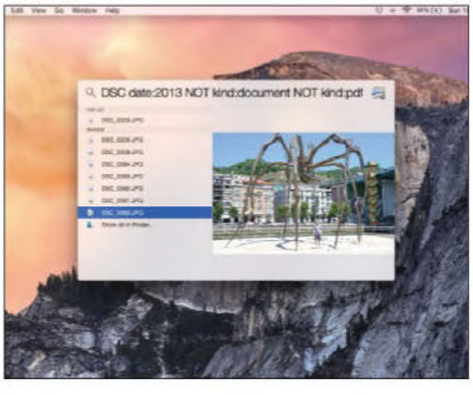
5: Refine a search

To refine a search by item type, enter 'kind:' followed by app, document, folder, pdf, presentation, image, contact, email, event, reminder, movie, music, bookmark or the name of the app that created it.



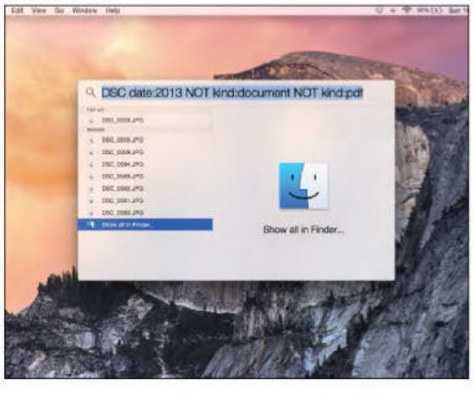
6: Set date ranges

Use the 'date:' function to refine by date modified. So '<SEARCH TERM> date:01/05/2015' will give results modified on that date alone. You can also use date ranges: 'date:01/05/2015-31/05/2015'.



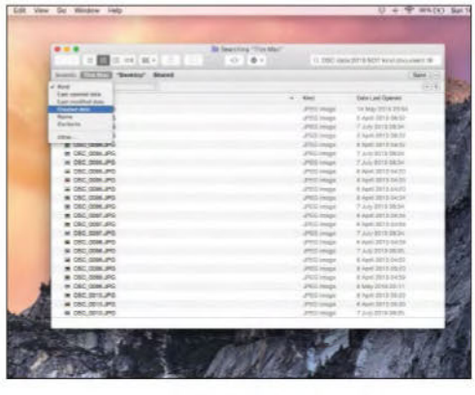
7: Use AND, OR and NOT

Once your results appear, you can refine further using Boolean operators 'AND', 'OR' and 'NOT' followed by a word or the date:/kind: functions; eg 'Martin AND job NOT kind:Mail'.



8: Still not there?

The Spotlight search results you see may only be the tip of the iceberg: there could be more results in each category. Scroll to the bottom and click 'Show all in Finder…' to view the complete list.



9: Refine the list

With your full list showing, you can refine it further by clicking '+' in the top right. Use the 'Kind:' and 'Any' drop-downs to choose how you'd like to refine. See 'Advanced filtering' boxout for more.

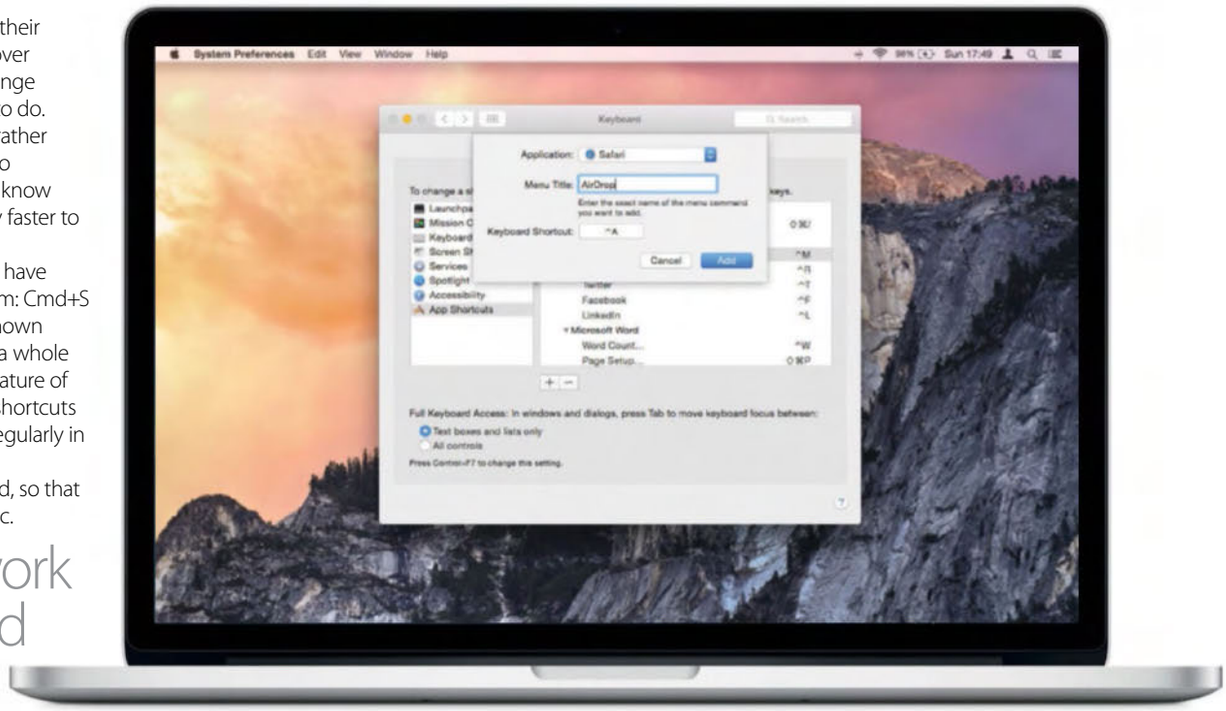
Create your own keyboard shortcuts

Work faster and smarter by setting up common commands as easy keyboard shortcuts using Ctrl, Cmd, Alt and more

When you watch a pro working on their Mac, you'll see their hands flicking over the keyboard all the time, using a range of shortcuts to do what they need to do. There's a good reason they do this rather than constantly using their mouse to navigate through menus: once you know the keyboard shortcut, it's invariably faster to work this way.

Lots of menu commands already have keyboard shortcuts assigned to them: Cmd+S for save is perhaps the most well-known time-saver. But you can take this to a whole new level by using a little-known feature of OS X to create your own keyboard shortcuts for the menu commands you use regularly in your favourite apps.

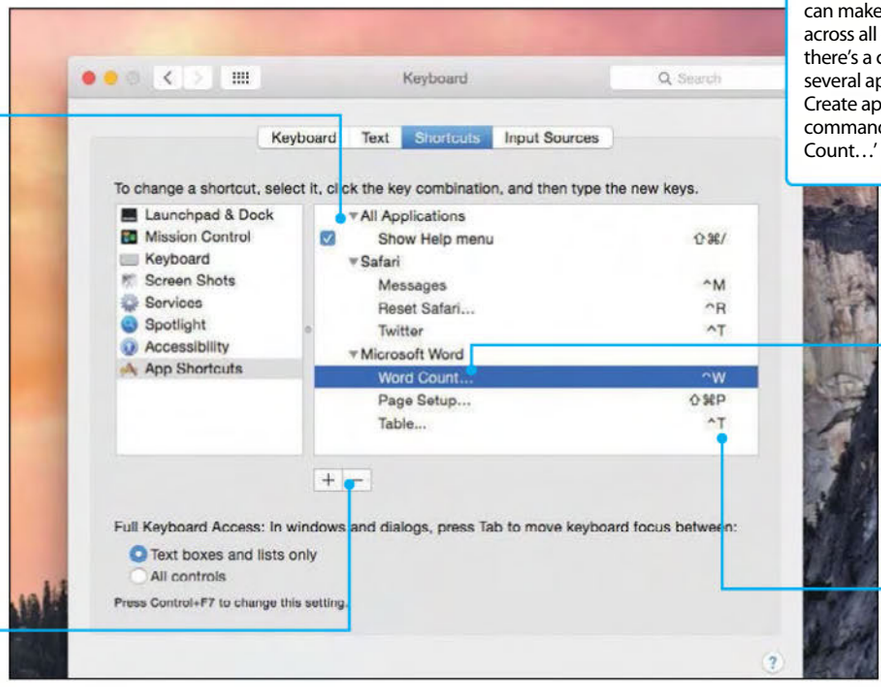
We'll show you how to get started, so that you too can work faster on your Mac.



"It's faster to work using keyboard shortcuts"

The Keyboard Shortcuts pane

Find your way around this little-known section of System Preferences



All Applications

Shortcuts that apply across all apps on your Mac sit under 'All Applications', while those you've created for a particular app will appear beneath that app's name. You can't move shortcuts once you've created them

Add or remove shortcut

Click the '+' button to start creating a new keyboard shortcut. If you'd like to remove one, select it in the list, then click the '–' button (note that you can't undo this!)

App-specific and all-app shortcuts

When creating your own shortcuts, you can make them work in a specific app or across all apps. The latter is useful where there's a command that's available across several apps, such as share via Twitter. Create app-specific shortcuts where the command is unique to an app – 'Word Count…' in Microsoft Word, for example.

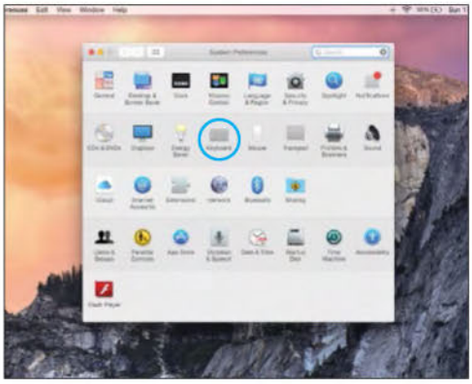
Command

This is the menu command your shortcut will trigger. It needs to match the menu command exactly, including spaces, capital letters and, where relevant, the '…' after the text

Shortcut keys

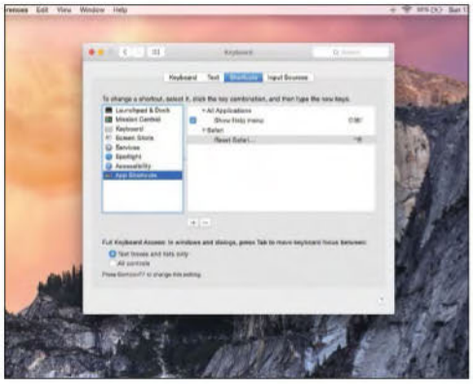
This is the shortcut combination that will trigger the command shown. To change the shortcut, click the command, then click the key combination, which will change to a text field. Then type the new shortcut

System Preferences | Set up custom keyboard shortcuts



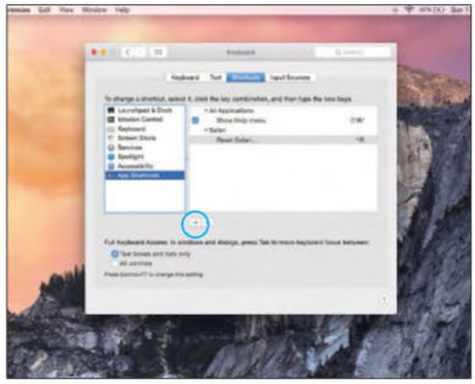
1: Keyboard preferences

The magic happens in System Preferences, so open this up via your Apple menu, then click Keyboard, then Shortcuts. On the left are the categories; on the right are the commands and shortcuts.



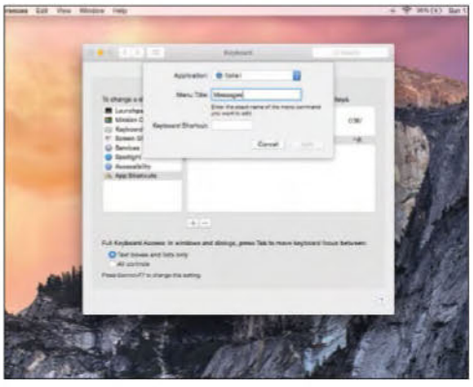
2: Understanding modifier keys

When creating shortcuts, avoid single keys. Instead, use a combination of a 'modifier key' – Cmd (represented as ⌘), Alt (⌥), Ctrl (⌃) and Shift (⇧) plus a letter, number or symbol.



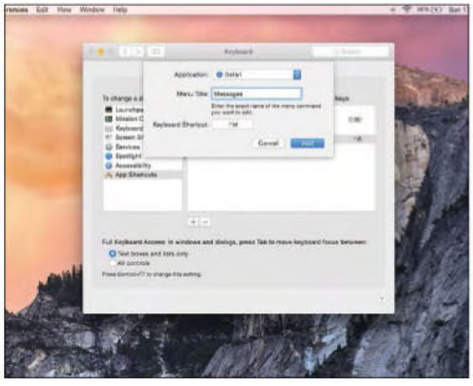
3: Creating a shortcut

Let's now set up our first shortcut. To show you how this works, we're going to create a shortcut for the 'share via Messages' command in Safari, so click App Shortcuts, then '+'.



4: Add your app

In the 'Application:' drop-down, select Safari. Below, 'Menu Title:' needs to be the exact word(s) that appears in the app's menu. In this case, it's 'Messages' (found under File>Share).

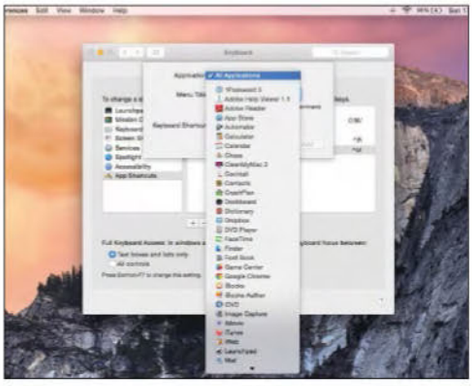


5: Choose your keys

Now click the Keyboard Shortcut box and type the shortcut you'd like. Because Ctrl (⌃) is a little-used modifier, it's a good bet for your own shortcuts as it's unlikely to create clashes. We've used Ctrl+M.

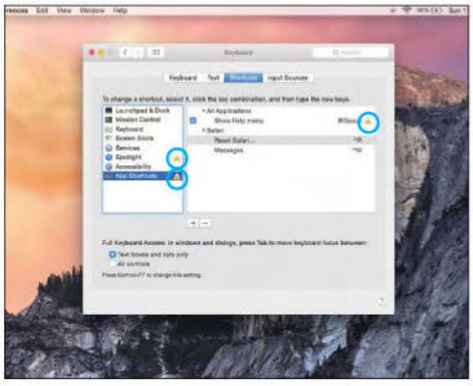
6: Add your shortcut

Finally, click Add and you'll see your command appear in the list under 'Safari'. Now go into Safari, click File>Share and see how 'Messages' now says '^M' next to it.



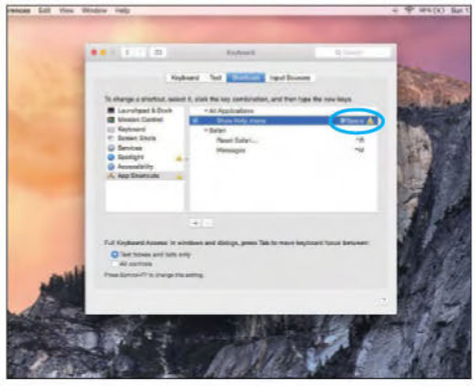
7: All-app shortcuts

You can add shortcuts that work across all apps in the same way – if the menu command is available. Select 'All Applications' from the 'Application:' drop-down in step 4, then repeat steps 5 and 6.



8: When shortcuts clash…

If the key combination you select for your shortcut is already in use, a yellow warning exclamation will appear alongside the shortcut in the Keyboard preference pane showing where the clash appears.



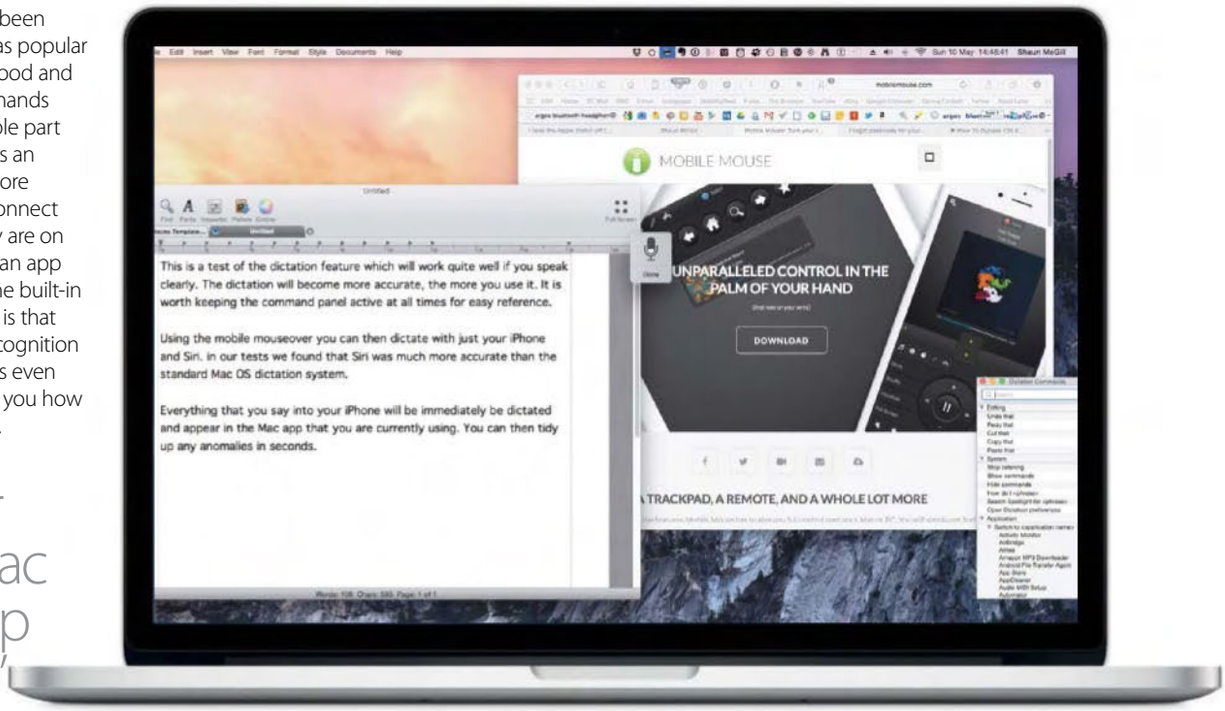
9: Remove the conflict

Click the shortcut key combination and choose a new shortcut to remove the clash – else you could end up with apps behaving erratically and performing two commands at once.

Improve the accuracy of your dictation

Improve the quality of dictation on your Mac in any app while speaking at a natural pace

The Mac OS X dictation feature has been present for some time, but it is not as popular as it should be. The recognition is good and if you understand the various commands it understands, it will become a staple part of your Mac usage. However, there is an alternative which may work even more accurately for you. It is possible to connect your iPhone to your Mac when they are on the same Wi-Fi network and to use an app to dictate text, as you would with the built-in feature. The difference here though is that Siri is used and the quality of the recognition is breathtakingly accurate and it gets even better over time. We will now show you how to make the most of both methods.



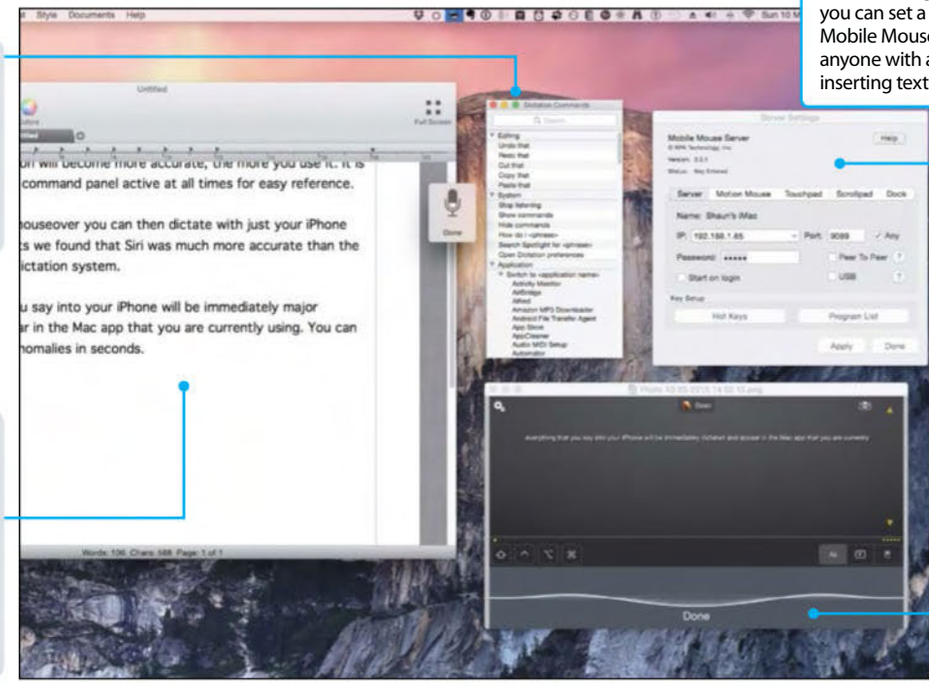
> "Connect your iPhone and Mac and use an app to dictate text"

Dictation options

Understand what works best

Dictation commands
Learning the dictation commands in Mac OS X will greatly speed up how you use the feature to write and navigate around the system. They are all logical and easy to remember over time

Near perfect translations
Over time, your dictations into Siri will get more and more accurate as the system starts to understand your voice better. You will be amazed at how quickly you can speak and still be understood



Networks and passwords
To use Mobile Mouse Pro on your Mac, you will need to ensure that your iPhone and Mac are using the same Wi-Fi network. Also, you can set a password for the Mac server in Mobile Mouse Pro, which is advisable to stop anyone with an iPhone controlling it and inserting text when they are in the vicinity.

A mobile mouse
Setting up Mobile Mouse Pro to work with a Mac is very simple, thanks to the clever way the server software links your iPhone with your main computer. It should work every time

Siri on Mac
Using Siri on an iPhone and having the translation sent to the Mac sounds inefficient, but in our tests everything happens in an instant. It's as if the iPhone is not being used at all

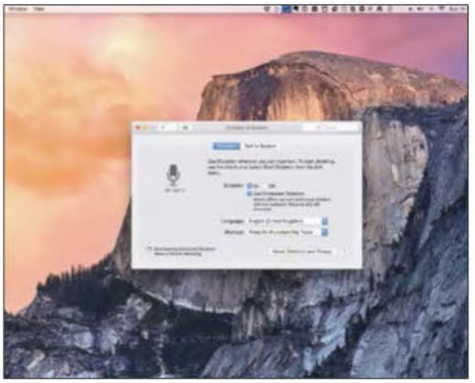
System Preferences | Dictate with accuracy and speed

1: Find the preferences

Open System Preferences and look for the Dictation & Speech icon. Considering this is a feature that is not often used, it holds a prominent space in the preferences.

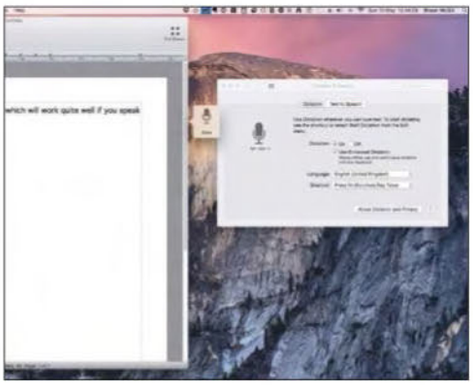
2: Test the microphone

Once you have opened the Dictation & Speech pane, you will be presented with the settings. Start speaking, to make sure that the microphone reacts to noise visually.



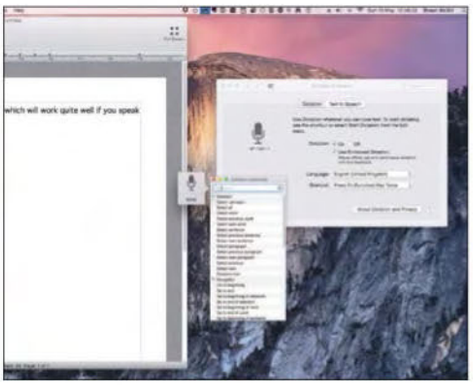
3: Enable enhanced dictation

Check the tickbox to enable enhanced dictation. It will initiate a 422MB download, so wait until it completes before you proceed further. It also allows offline dictation.



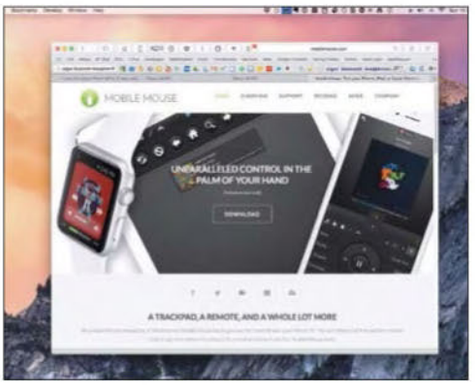
4: Test the accuracy

You should now open an app which allows for text input and then use your preferred command to enable dictation. Start speaking to test the current accuracy on your Mac.



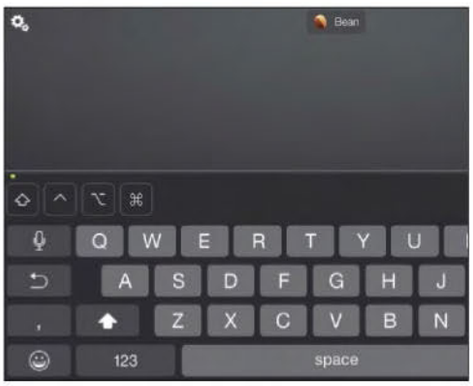
5: Show the commands

Say 'Show commands' and a list will appear which displays all of the navigation and formatting commands. It is quite extensive, so take some time to read through the list.



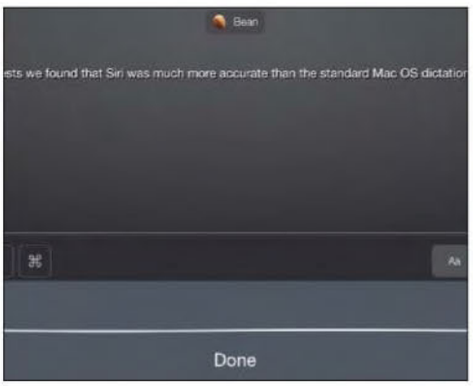
6: Another option

There is a better option, which is to use Siri on a Mac. Go to **mobilemouse.com** and download the software, and then download Mobile Mouse Pro from the iOS App Store on your iPhone.



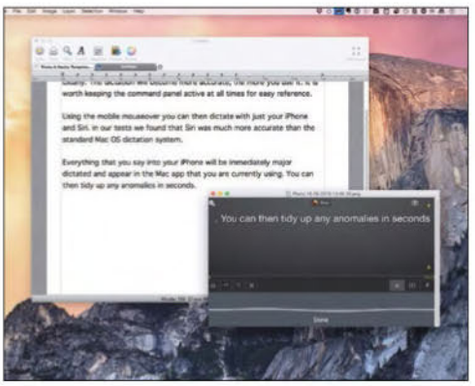
7: Set it up

Once the server is installed on your Mac, you will be able to control the mouse using your iPhone screen. Tap the iPhone keyboard icon at the top and then the microphone.



8: Much better accuracy

You will notice that the recognition system is more accurate using Siri on your iPhone and that you can speak more naturally. The text will be input on your Mac instantly.



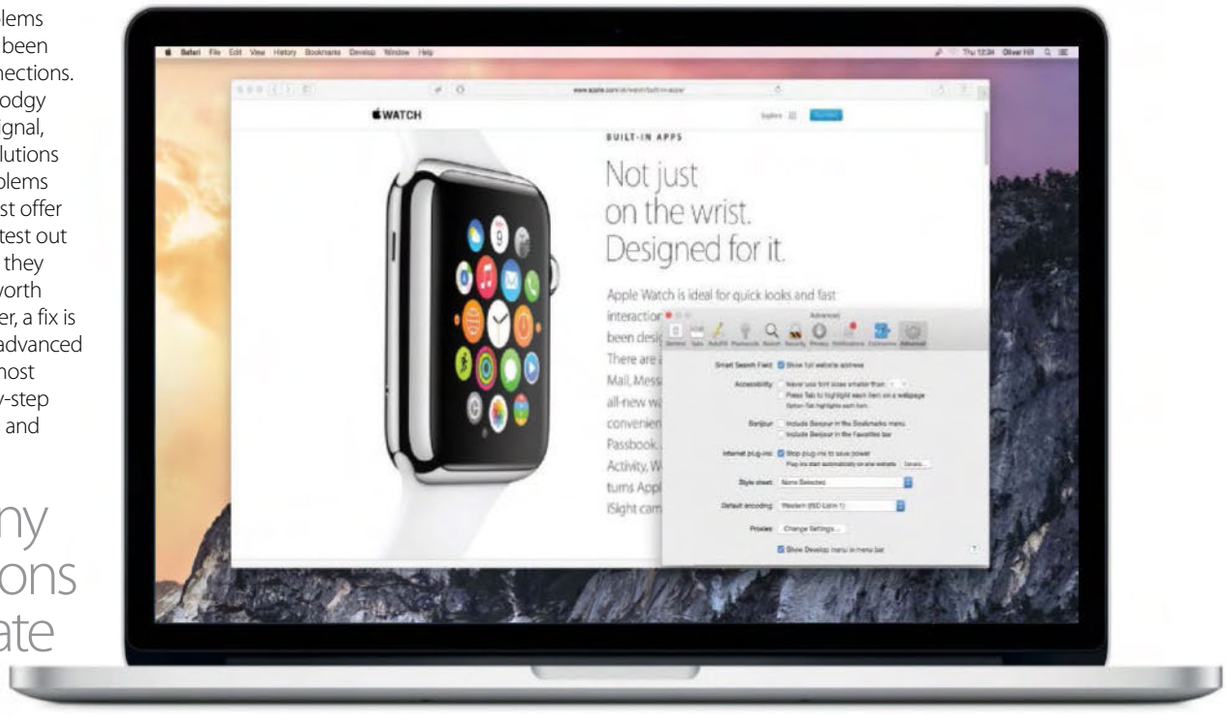
9: Making changes

Remember that you can say 'comma' and 'full stop' etc to include punctuation in text. The Siri feature is incredibly accurate and will speed up dictation immeasurably.

Fix Wi-Fi and Bluetooth problems

Tackle one of Yosemite's biggest problems head on with these expert tips and tricks

One of the most documented problems with the OS X Yosemite update has been with both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connections. Whether it's poor transfer speeds, dodgy connections or a complete loss of signal, there are a multitude of different solutions to help eradicate each of these problems littered all over the internet, but most offer only a temporary solution. You can test out several of these supposed fixes, but they require a lot of effort, when it isn't worth your time for the most part. However, a fix is possible, but it requires some fairly advanced tinkering with some of your Mac's most delicate settings. Follow our step-by-step guide and we'll get rid of your Wi-Fi and Bluetooth issues permanently.

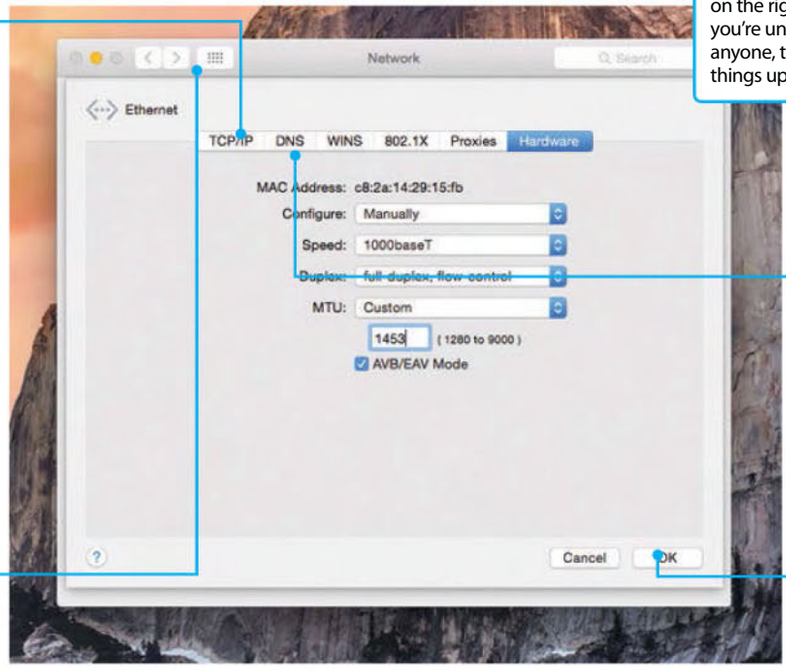


"There are many different solutions to help eradicate these issues"

Improve connectivity

Diagnose intermittent problems with ease

Source of the problem
The Network tab should always be your first port of call when it comes to diagnosing any problems with Safari. The tabs at the top list the different areas of your connection you can improve



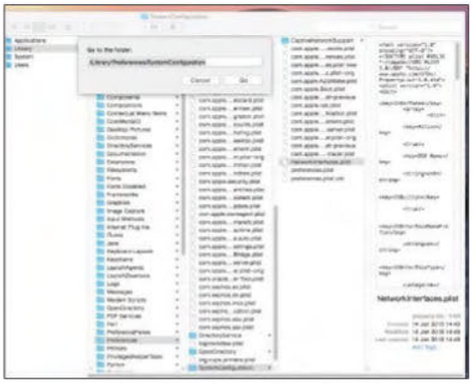
Who can you find?
A quick way to diagnose any Bluetooth issues is to see if your Mac can still discover nearby Bluetooth sources around you, using the panel on the right side of the menu. If it turns out you're unable to find, let alone connect to anyone, then use the steps in this tutorial to get things up and running again.

Internet connections
Although the DNS menu can look daunting, it's certainly worth understanding. When a problem with your connection arrives, editing the server details can fix the problem quickly

Hardware fixes
If you're having problems with your LAN and Ethernet connectivity, the Hardware tab is the place to go. You can edit and change any port data to make them more stable, or to simply help improve their stability

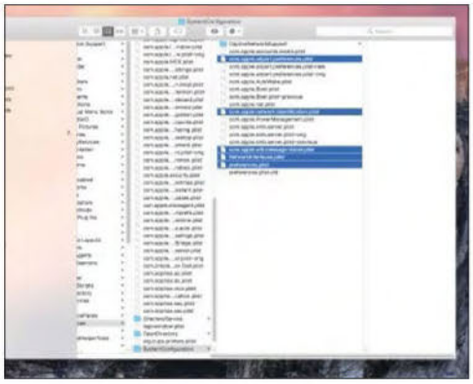
Be cautious
One thing to remember is that playing around with your IP, DNS or WINS details can have an adverse affect on your Mac. Make sure you fully understand what each of these options does before confirming any changes

System Preferences | Improve Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity



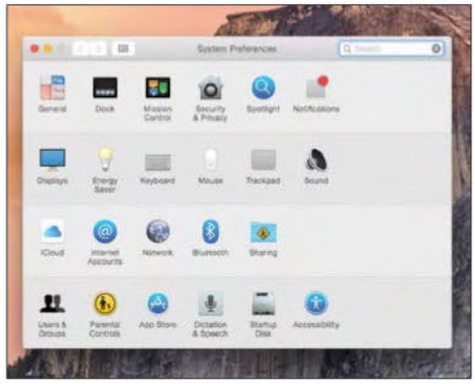
1: Find 'SystemConfiguration'

Turn off your Wi-Fi and search for '/Library/Preferences/SystemConfiguration/' within Finder. The easiest way to get this search menu up is to hit Cmd+Shift+G.



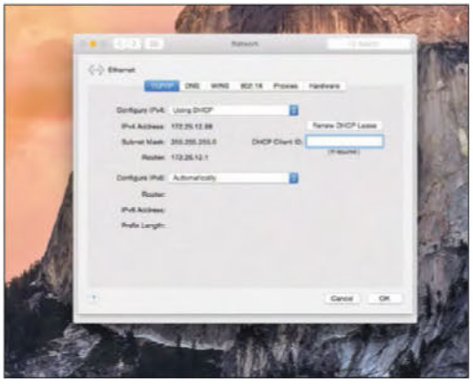
2: Create Wi-Fi backups

Select the files shown above and move to your desktop. When you reboot your Mac, OS X will recreate these in the 'SystemConfig' folder, which should restart your Wi-Fi connection.



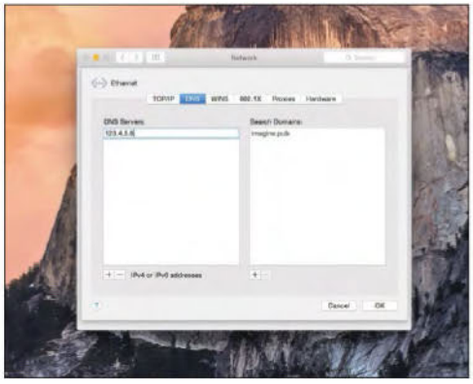
3: Open Network tab

Reboot your Mac and once it's loaded up open the Network tab from within the Mac's System Preferences. This will be the basis of where you'll make all of the main changes.



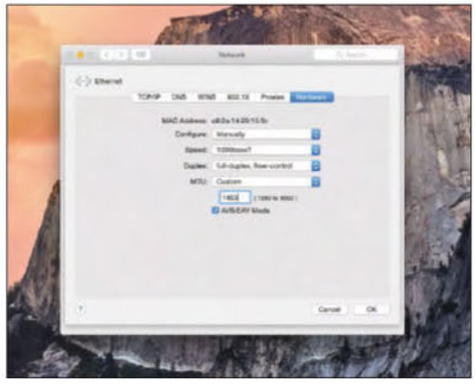
4: Edit Locations

From the menu that appears, connect to your usual Wi-Fi source before selecting the Edit Locations tab. Rename the network. Now select the Advanced button at the bottom.



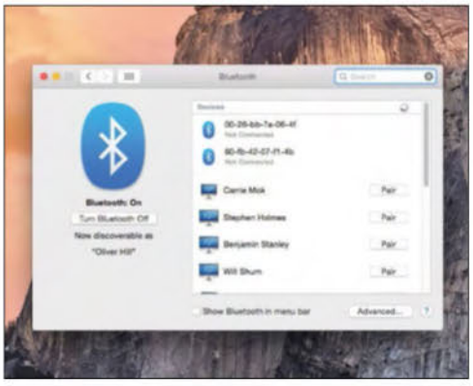
5: Input custom DNS

Select the DNS tab and press the + button to add your own server details. Input either the DNS details your ISP provided you, or use Safari to locate faster DNS servers.



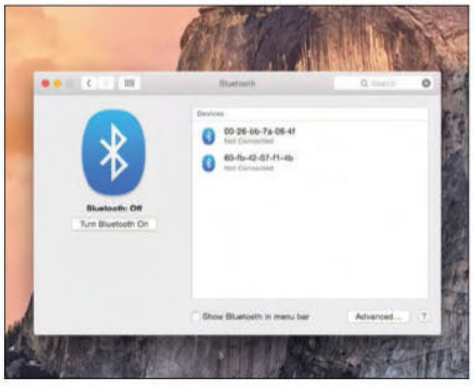
6: Add MTU details

Now select the Hardware tab and select Manually from the Configure drop-down. Enter the digits 1453 in the MTU box that's provided before confirming the details and rebooting.



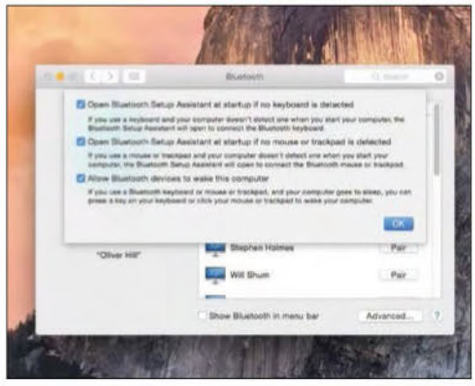
7: Find Bluetooth menu

With your Wi-Fi now sorted, it's time to turn your attention to Bluetooth. Open System Preferences and select Bluetooth. A list of all your available connections will now appear.



8: Disable Bluetooth

Before attempting to reset you'll need to turn it off completely. For the most part, Bluetooth issues can be fixed by a simple restart, but if not, we'll perform a reset of the PRAM.



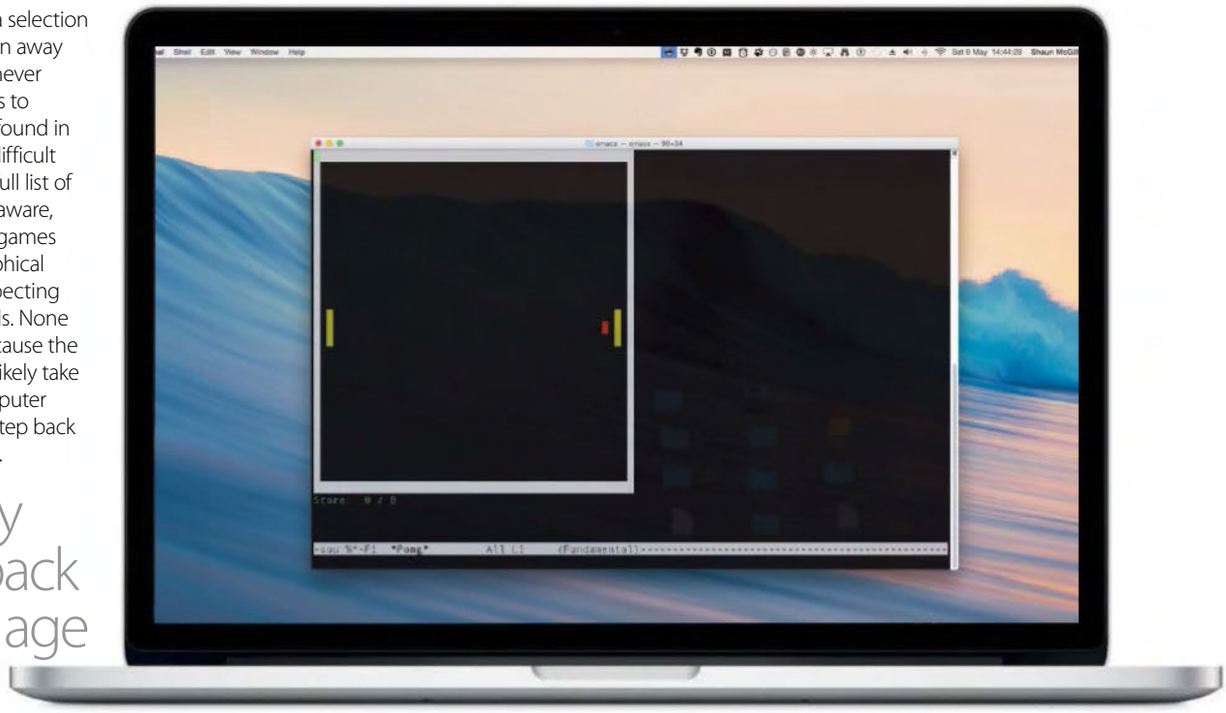
9: Perform a reset

Turn off your Mac and hold down the Cmd+Option+P+R keys to reset. Hold down these keys until your Mac chimes twice at which point you can let go of the keys.

Play built-in Unix games for free

Enjoy a selection of free games by simply entering a couple of Terminal commands and running the Emacs text editor

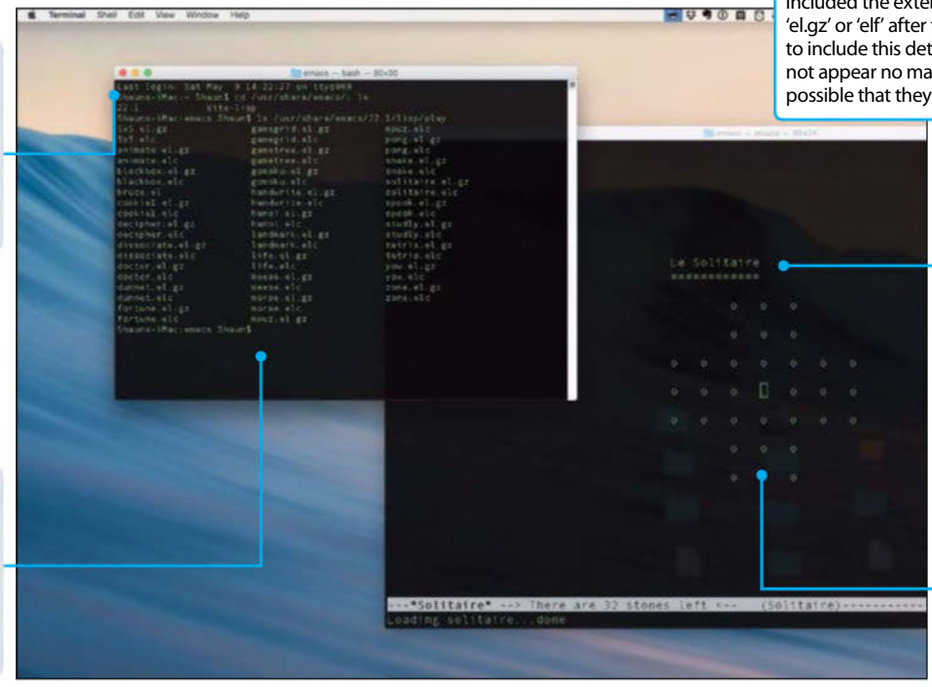
This tutorial will give you access to a selection of free Unix games which are hidden away in your Mac, but would likely have never come to your attention. The process to access these games uses Terminal (found in Applications>Utilities), but it is not difficult and you should be able to see the full list of games on your Mac in minutes. Be aware, however, that these are old-school games which rely on text and lines for graphical elements, so you should not be expecting intricate graphics and arcade sounds. None of this actually matters, though, because the gameplay is still intriguing and will likely take you back to the golden age of computer games in an instant. We shall now step back in time and enjoy some free games.



"The gameplay will take you back to the golden age of games"

A handful of fun games

Simplicity can still be fun



Two commands

You only need to input two Terminal commands to access the games and then remember one key combination to run them. It's a manual process, but it is very quick and efficient

A new library

Take some time exploring the included games and you just may find a gem or two that will keep you coming back for more. We have been particularly impressed with Tetris and Blackbox

When games don't appear

If a game does not appear after you have typed the name in, make sure that you have not included the extension. They are listed with 'el.gz' or 'elf' after them, but it's not necessary to include this detail. Sometimes games may not appear no matter what you do, because it's possible that they are not on your Mac.

Select a theme

Play around with the Terminal themes because they can make a huge difference to the gaming experience. Some are dark, some are light and some are very colourful, which can feel more modern

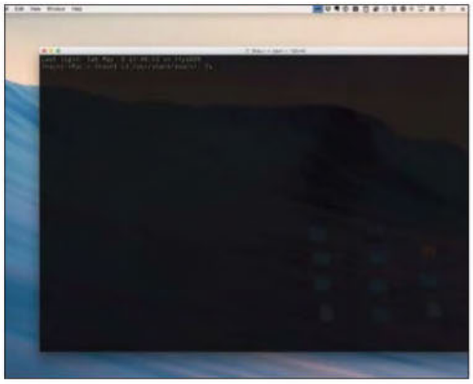
Simple graphics

It would be wise to not expect console-quality games here, but to reminisce in the world of retro games based on text and lines. They are still surprisingly enjoyable to play

Terminal | Access free games in Terminal

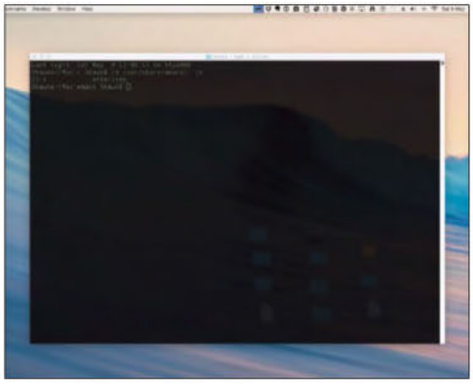
1: Open the Terminal

Go to Applications and open the Utilities folder. Now open Terminal and you are ready to begin. You can select 'Keep in Dock' if you intend to use it a lot in the future.



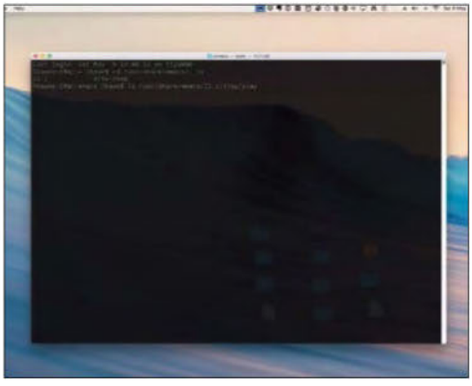
2: The first command

The very first thing you need to do is to find your Emacs number. Input 'cd /usr/share/emacs/; ls' and then press Enter to see what version you have included on your Mac.



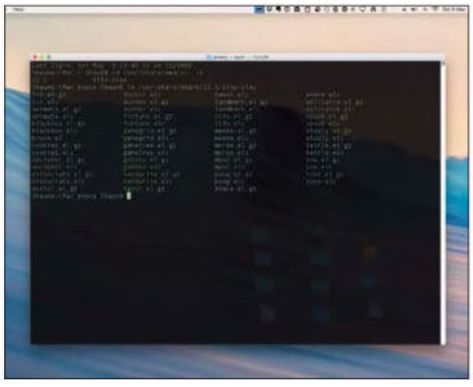
3: Remember your number

A number will now appear with 'site-lisp' following it. Note down the number of your Emacs. It is basically a text editor which includes many Easter eggs like these games.



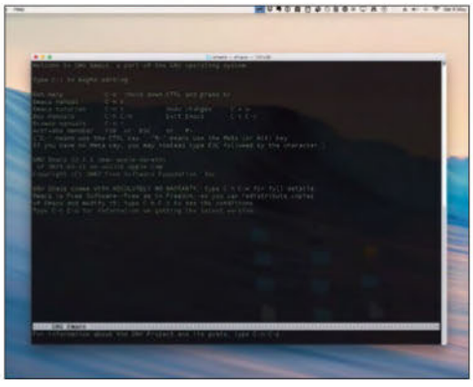
4: The final command

You now need to input 'ls /usr/share/emacs/22.1/lisp/play', making sure that the number is the same as the one you located in the third step. Press Enter to continue.



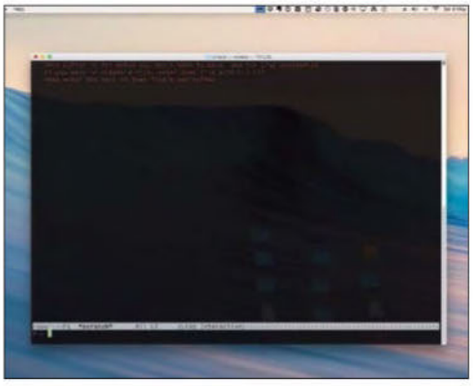
5: A list of games

A list of Unix games will appear and we would suggest either copy/pasting the list or taking a screenshot using Shift+Cmd+3 so they are handy for future reference.



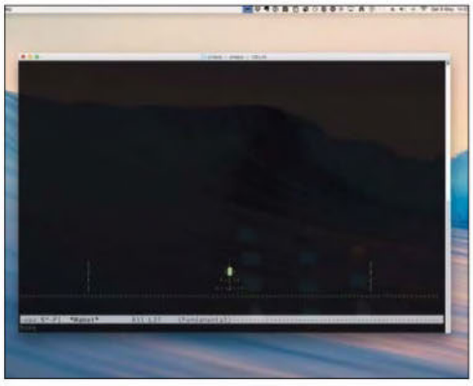
6: Turn on Emacs

Now type 'Emacs' into Terminal to start the Emacs text editor and wait for a new screen to appear. You now need to press Esc followed by 'x' to continue with the process.



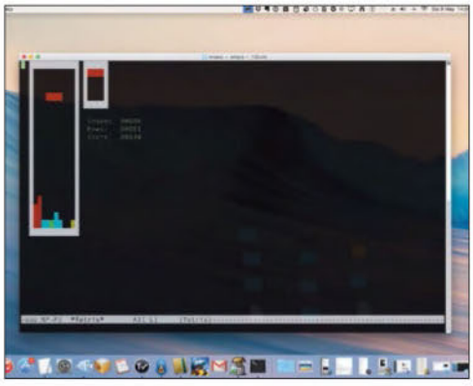
7: Choose a game

You will see three lines of text at the top with a small window at the bottom for you to type into. Now simply type the name of the game (without the extension) to load it.



8: Your first game

The game will appear within the same window and you are now ready to begin playing it. Some basic instructions will be displayed to get you started straight away.



9: Quickly change games

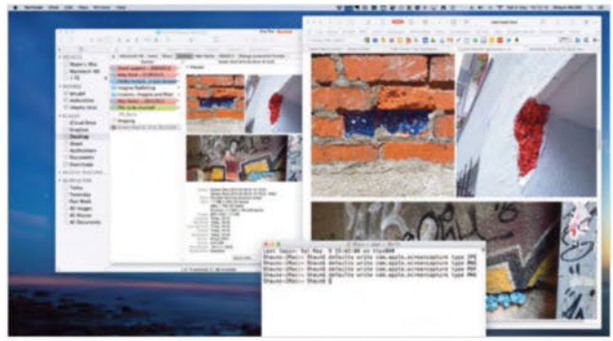
To try a new game, press Esc again and then 'x', and you can then type in the name of another game. It will remove the previous game and start a new one immediately.

Change screenshot formats

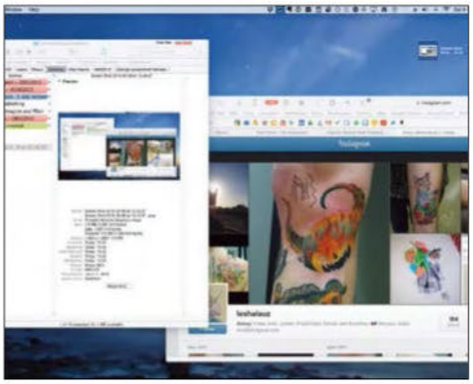
Save your screenshots in any file format which is compatible with Mac OS X

By default, Mac OS X will save all the screenshots you take in the PNG file format. This makes a lot of sense because this format is frugal in terms of memory and also offers excellent quality for sharing or publishing on the web. However, there may be times when you want to save in a different format and there is a way to do this automatically, which will stop you having to convert the PNG images every single time. We will show you how to use a Terminal command to change the format of any future screenshot you take, and you can go back and change the format time and time again depending on your needs. It's a good example of how powerful Terminal can be with the use of a simple command.

"Change the format of any future screenshot"

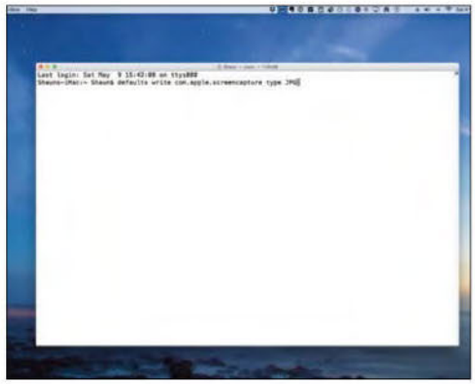


Terminal | Change screenshot file format



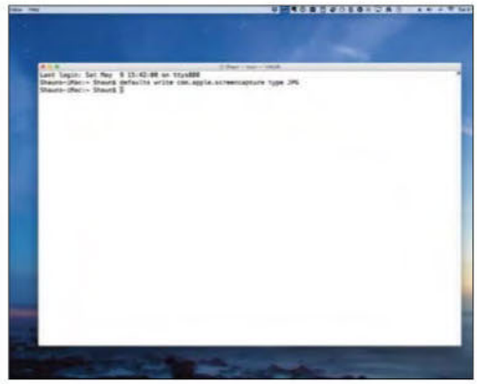
1: Taking screenshots

You can take a screenshot by pressing the key combination Shift+Cmd+3 and it will be saved on your desktop. Select the Get Info option for the file and you will see that it's in PNG format.



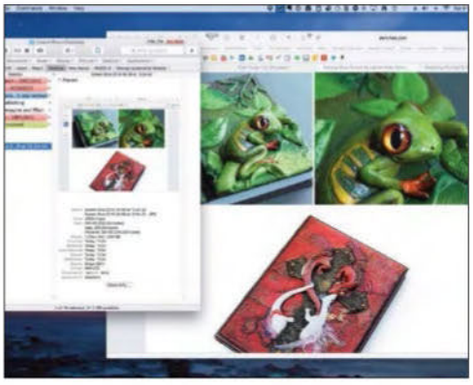
2: Open the Terminal

Open Terminal (in Applications>Utilities) and enter 'defaults write com.apple.screencapture type JPG'. This will default all new screenshots to save in JPG format in the future.



3: Nothing happens

Don't expect to see any confirmation that changes have taken place. Terminal will stall for a few seconds and you will then see a new line appear, ready for you to type.

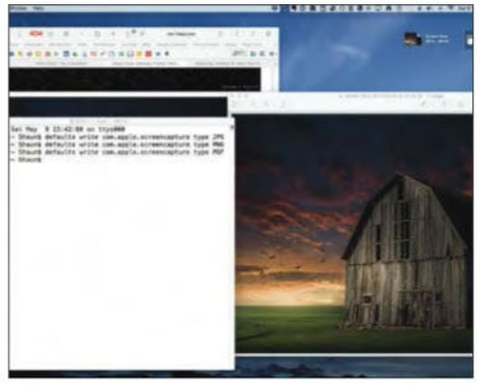


4: Time to test

When you next take a screenshot, select Get Info for it and you should see it listed as a JPG file. The change you have made is not noticeable until you inspect the new file.

5: Change it back

To change the format back for future screenshots, simply enter 'defaults write com.apple.screencapture type YOUR CHOSEN FORMAT' in Terminal and it will change instantly.



6: Save as PDF

You can also add 'PDF' to the end of the Terminal command to save screenshots automatically to a format that is still widely used in businesses and which is more secure.

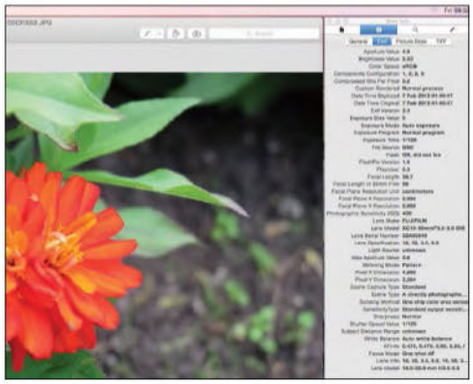
Compress junk image metadata

Streamline the data attached to photos to save disk space and optimise them for the web

Depending on the settings you've enabled, you'll find a certain amount of data is attached to each photo you take, commonly know as EXIF data. Most of this data won't be of much interest to you, and as such takes up unnecessary space on your hard drive. There's no simple way of streamlining this without a third-party app. Our app of choice is the fantastic ImageOptim app, which can be downloaded through its official webpage. Once downloaded, it's a case of locating all the images that contain EXIF data and letting ImageOptim systematically do the removal work for you. Use the following tutorial to correctly remove any EXIF data from your stored images and start freeing up more hard drive space instantly.

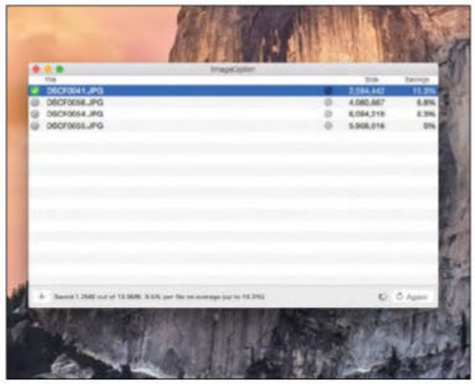
"Most EXIF data won't be of much interest to you"

ImageOptim | Remove unwanted image data



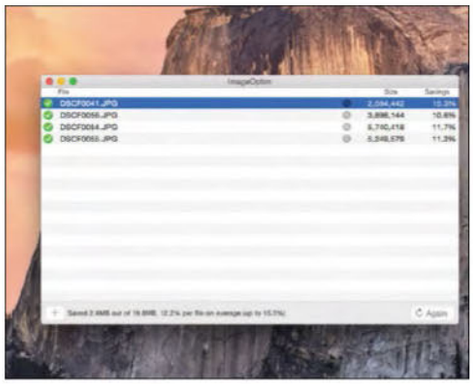
1: Check your photos

Open a photo with the Preview app. Once loaded, select the Tools option and then the Show Inspector tab. Open the EXIF data panel on the side menu to see the attached data.



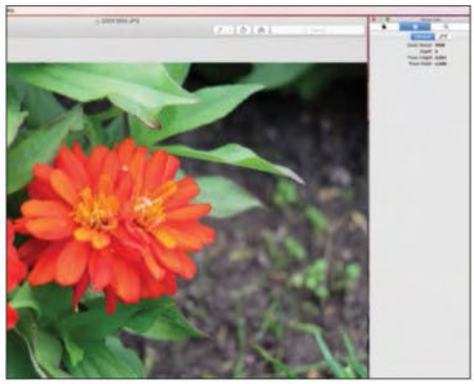
2: Put through ImageOptim

Open the ImageOptim app and drag all the photos you want EXIF data removed from. They'll automatically be processed through the app, but it can take a while to complete.



3: Look at results

Once a tick appears next to each of the images, the conversion process is complete. Each image will also show how much data the app managed to remove from it.



4: Removed data

Now open the same photo from before and head towards the Show Inspector tab once again. If the removal has worked, there should now be no EXIF column for you to click on.

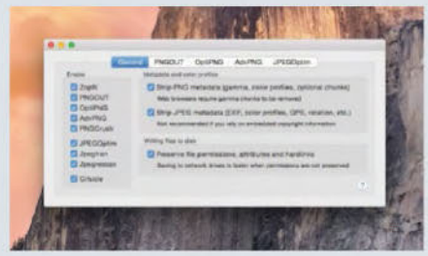
Strip away any extra elements

Customise ImageOptim

If you're having trouble removing certain bits of data, some tinkering in ImageOptim's settings will help.

1: Open settings

Open up the ImageOptim app and select the Preferences menu from the toolbar. Here you'll find a wide range of additional options to get more from the ImageOptim app.



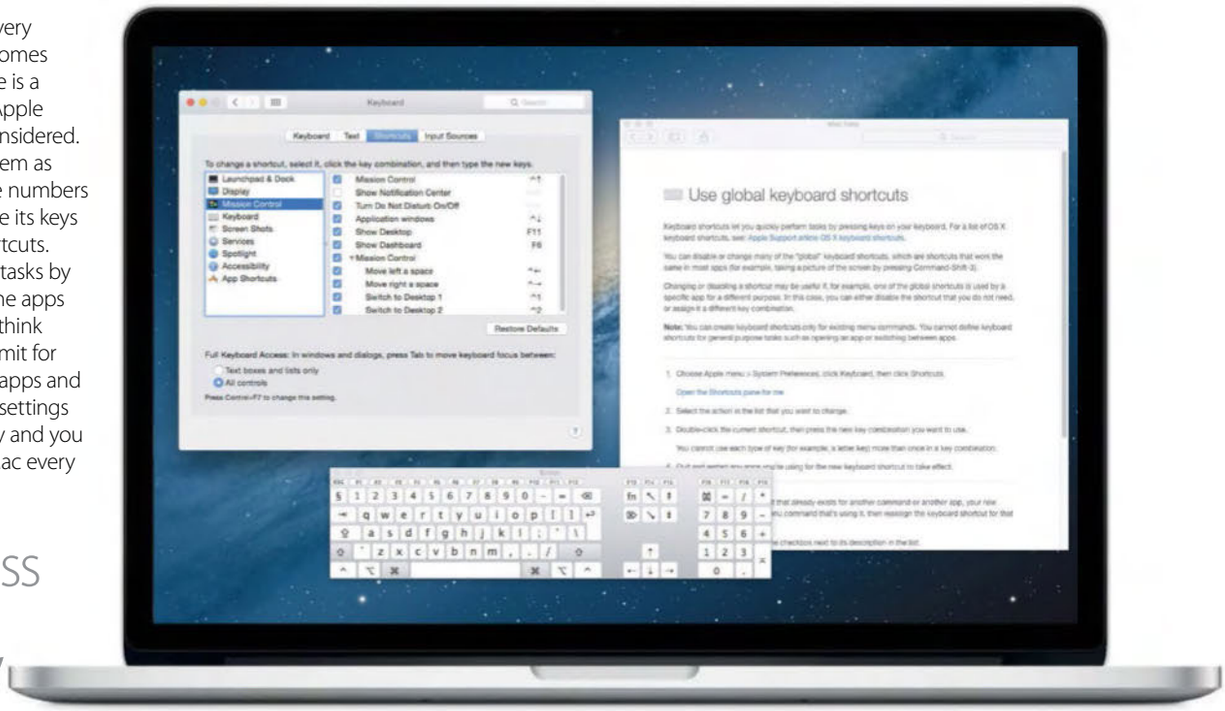
2: Remove metadata

Go ahead and enable both the Strip PNG and Strip JPEG options to help remove additional metadata from your images when you put them through the ImageOptim app.

Use your keyboard as a launcher

Turn your numeric keyboard into a super-fast launcher for your most often used Mac OS X tasks

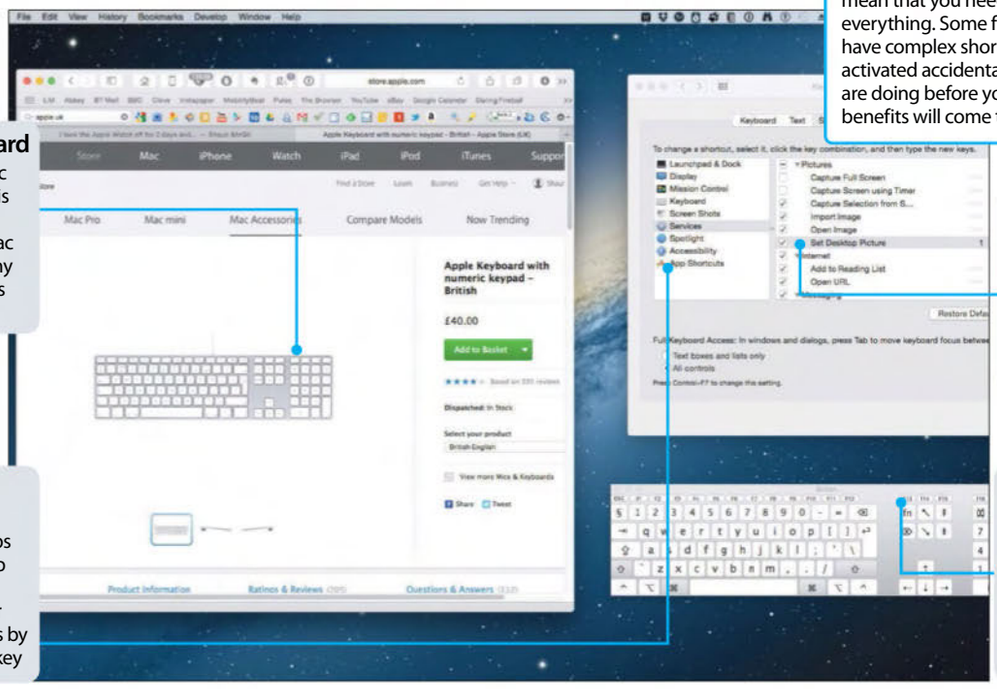
The Bluetooth Apple keyboard is a very popular and useful accessory, and comes bundled with many iMacs, but there is a distinct advantage of the numeric Apple keyboard that you may not have considered. The number pad is seen by the system as being completely separate from the numbers above the letters and so you can use its keys in Preferences to create unique shortcuts. This means that you can undertake tasks by tapping one key and even launch the apps you use the most often. When you think about it, ten apps is likely near the limit for most people in terms of daily-used apps and so one-tap access is now just a few settings away. Create your shortcuts carefully and you will work much quicker with your Mac every single day.



"One-tap access is just a few settings away"

Multiple shortcut options

You can create hundreds of shortcuts



The official keyboard

The official Apple numeric keyboard is perfect for this task because it has been designed to work with Mac OS X and it gives you many more shortcut options. It's also great to type on

Link to apps

The ability to create numeric shortcuts for apps is also available in the App Shortcuts option. You can now access all of your favourite apps and games by tapping just one chosen key

Don't go crazy!

Just because you can create hundreds of new keyboard shortcuts on your Mac does not mean that you need to go crazy and change everything. Some functions deliberately have complex shortcuts so that they are not activated accidentally. Think about what you are doing before you start, make a plan and the benefits will come to you.

Every major task

Within the Keyboard preferences, you can create shortcuts for every Mac OS X task that you use each day. Each set of shortcuts is laid out in sections

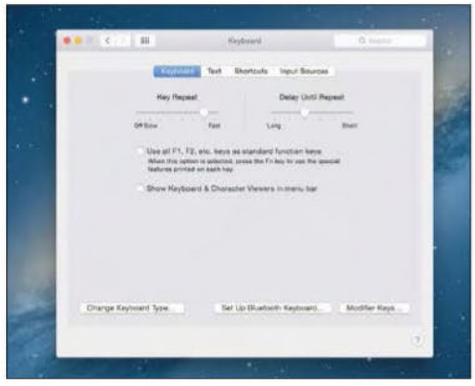
It never ends

If you use function keys alongside standard numerics, there really is no limit to how many shortcuts you can create. You can greatly speed up your Mac in a few seconds

System Preferences | Create keyboard shortcuts in seconds

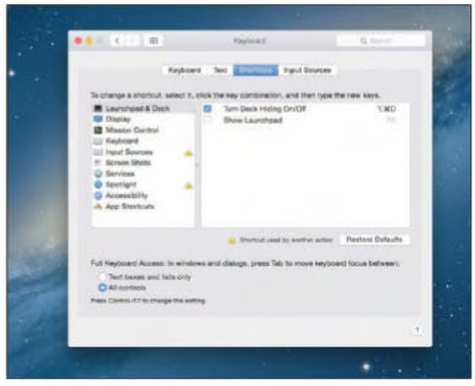
1: The right keyboard

This tutorial is designed to work with the Apple Keyboard with numeric keypad, but it should also work with most compatible keyboards that include a numeric section.



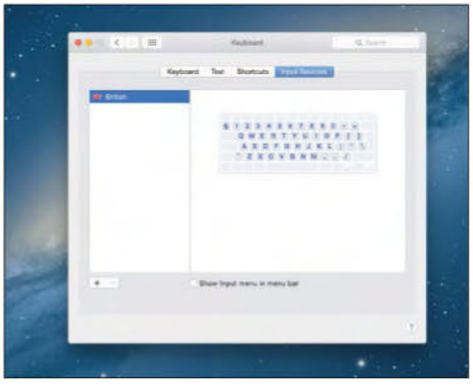
2: The keyboard settings

Open System Preferences and look for the Keyboard icon. When you click it, the options look quite sparse, but you may be surprised at how many settings you can tweak.



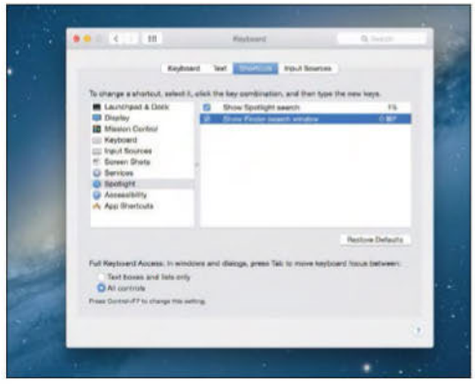
3: Further options

Click the Shortcuts tab at the top to see a list of options in the left-hand column. If you use the numeric keyboard often for numbers, this tutorial may not be for you.



4: Something to remember

The important point to remember about the full Apple Keyboard is that the right-hand numeric keys are seen by Mac OS X to be separate from the main ones, which is why they can be used for shortcuts.

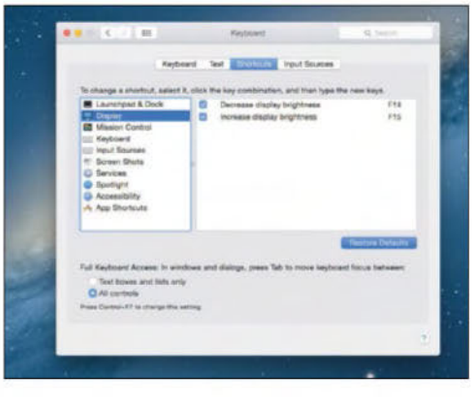


5: Create a shortcut

You can now click on any feature within the Shortcuts tab and double-click the current shortcut to change it to a new one. You will be warned if you create a duplicate.

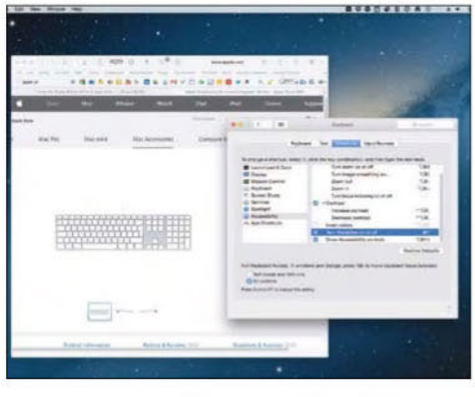
6: A single key

The trick here is to use a single right-hand numeric key for your most used commands. Double-click and simply choose any number and it will be loaded as the default.



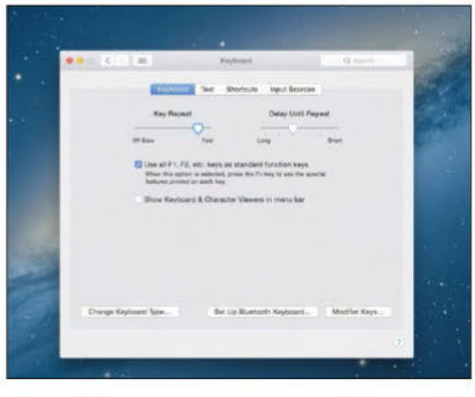
7: Restore defaults

If at any time you wish to return to the standard key combinations because you want to use the numeric keys for straight numbers, simply click Restore Defaults to revert.



8: Unlimited shortcuts

When you run out of numeric keys, you can then use a modifier such as Cmd. This means that you can now create shortcuts with Cmd+1, Cmd+2 etc. It really is unlimited.



9: Modifier keys

You can also set up how the F1, F2 etc keys work in the Keyboard tab. Changing how the Fn key works with them can open up even more new keyboard shortcut potential.

Troubleshoot lag issues in Safari

Solve those pesky slowdown issues while browsing with Yosemite's default web browser

After prolonged use, chances are that you'll come across some noticeable slowdown when using the Safari browser on your Mac, especially after updating to OS X Yosemite. Although it's easy enough to simply ignore it, after too long it can dramatically affect how the browser functions, so it's essential that you tackle the problem as soon as you come across it.

There are numerous myths around that explain different methods of solving your lag woes, but most of them simply won't work, and in some cases, can be detrimental to your Mac. However, we've put together a guide of some of the best ways to fix any slowdown issues you may be having with the Safari browser. Most can be done in just a few minutes, so read on and get Safari running at full speed once again.

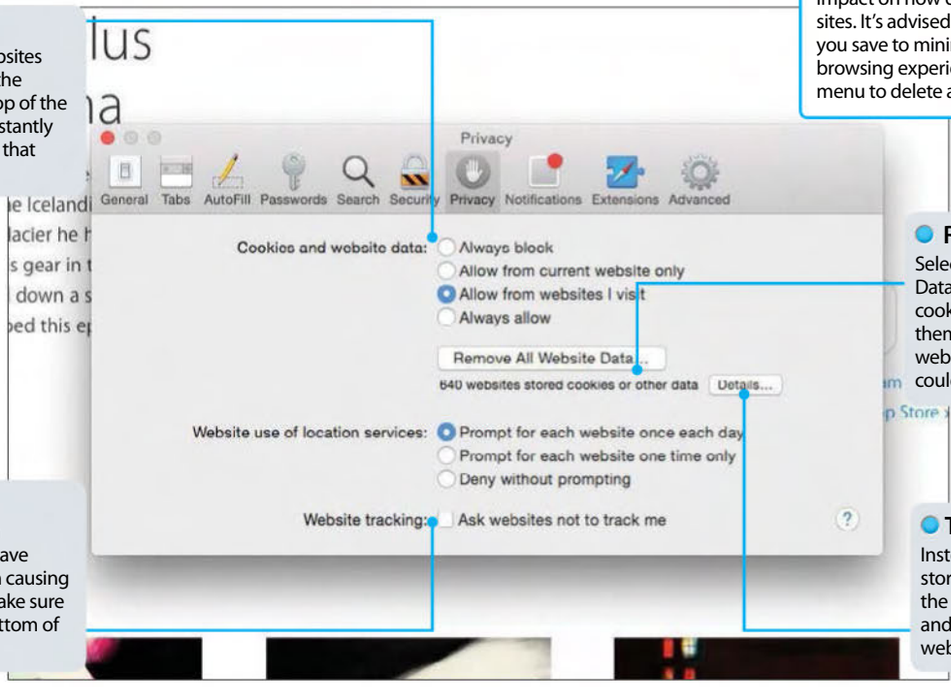
"It's essential you tackle this problem immediately"

Manage cookies and data

Keep Safari running at optimum speed

Block cookies
To permanently prohibit websites from storing cookies, select the Always Block option at the top of the Privacy menu. This should instantly reduce any slowdown issues that you've encountered

Streamline Favorites
Although it's a great option to be able to store all your favourite websites in Safari, it can impact on how quick Safari navigates between sites. It's advised to streamline how many links you save to minimise the impact it has on your browsing experience. Open up the Favorites menu to delete any that are no longer needed.

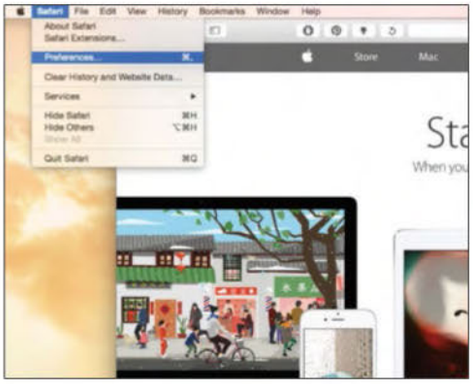


Remove data
Select the Remove All Website Data option to delete all the cookies that have been stored from them. Depending on how many websites you've accessed, deleting could take a while to complete

Disable tracking
By preventing websites from tracking your data, you can save snippets of information from causing slowdown in the browser. Make sure the box isn't ticked at the bottom of the Privacy menu

Take a closer look
Instead of completely deleting all stored cookies, users can select the Details option that's provided and then individually choose the websites to be removed

Safari | Solve lag problems in Safari

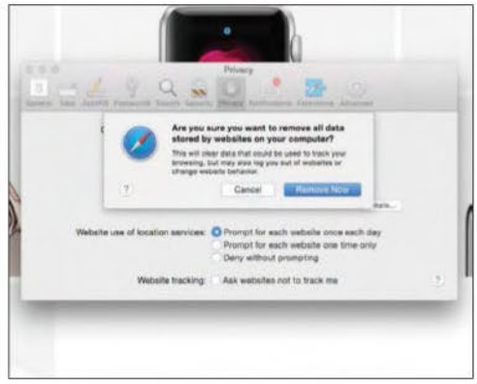


1: Open Preferences

Select the Preferences tab from within the Safari browser. From the new menu that opens, select the Extensions option that's located on the right side of the menu.

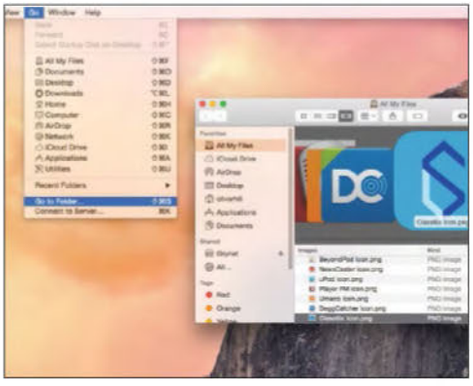
2: Manage extensions

Extensions can be one of the biggest influences when it comes to causing lag in Safari. Disable any you suspect to be causing the issue, or turn the option off altogether.



3: Remove data

Now select the Privacy option from the same menu, before choosing the Remove Website Data option. This deletes any of the data that has been previously added to websites.

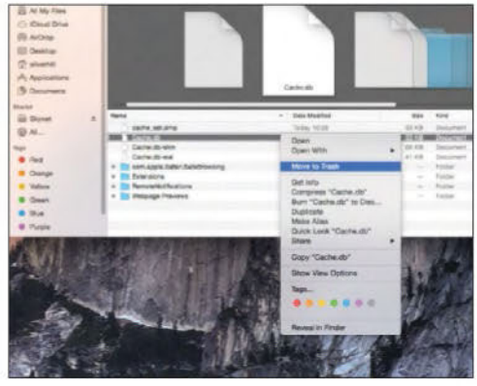


4: Clearing cache

The final phase of solving lag issues is to delete the cache. Firstly, open the Finder on your Mac and select the Go to Folder option underneath the Go tab on the toolbar.

5: Go to the folder

A text bar will open up and you'll then need to enter the following: ~/Library/Caches/com.apple.Safari/Cache.db to be taken to the cache file that will need to be deleted.



6: Delete cache

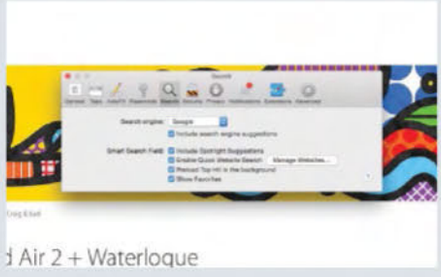
Several variations of Safari's cache file will be listed, but specifically you'll need to move the file named Cache.db to the Trash. Restart Safari and your issue should be fixed.

Switch between search engines on the fly

Manage a variety of options

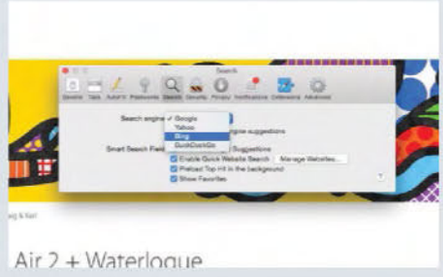
If you want to explore every way to increase the speed of Safari, then you'll want to take a look at switching your default search engine. Although the changes aren't massive, each search engine on offer takes a different amount of time to process your search and show the results. Use these tips to switch search engines within the Safari browser.

"Improve your search results by changing search engines"



1: Open the Search menu

Select the Preferences while in Safari and then scroll to the Search section. By default, you should find that your search engine is set to use Google. Press on the arrow icon in order to change all of this.



2: Switch engines

Safari will now display some alternatives for you to use. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses, but we recommend Bing as being one of the quickest search engines on the market today.

Archive iTunes tracks with iBatch

Keep your iTunes library neat and tidy by removing and backing up unwanted tracks

If you're a prolific iTunes user, chances are you're going to have a vast library to explore and use. Although the choice is nice, it does leave you with a lot of clutter to deal with if you don't listen to some of the older songs attached to your account. Users can delete tracks from their iTunes library, but this leaves them with no options when they want to add them back to their account at a later date. Instead, by downloading the iBatch app, users can create a virtual archive of songs they no longer want and remove the entry from their library. However, if they then change their mind, it's possible to add the archived songs back to your account in a matter of minutes. Here's how it's done.

"Users can create a virtual archive of songs they no longer want"

Manage media in iBatch

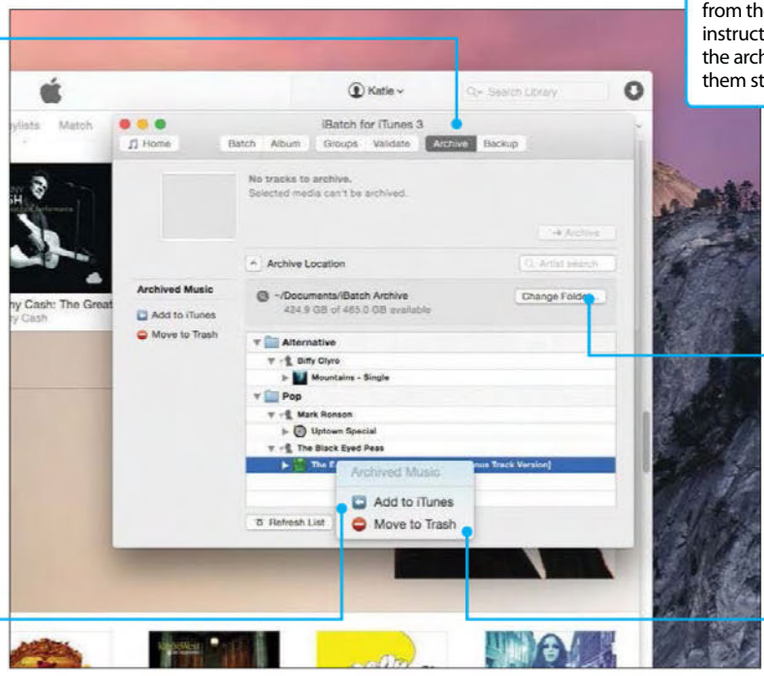
Explore iBatch's impressive feature list

Archive

Once you've highlighted a song or album, use the Archive button to remove it from your library and on to your iBatch account. Depending on the number of songs, archiving shouldn't take very long

Not in the cloud

If you're actively using iTunes in the Cloud, then you'll have some difficulty archiving albums. Instead, you'll need to download any songs from the cloud and archive them as per the instructions in this tutorial. If you then return the archived album to your iTunes account, add them straight to your cloud account once again.



Switch folders

If you're looking to archive a large number of songs, consider splitting the archives into different folders to make them easier to navigate. Use the Change Folder icon to set a new archiving folder on your hard drive

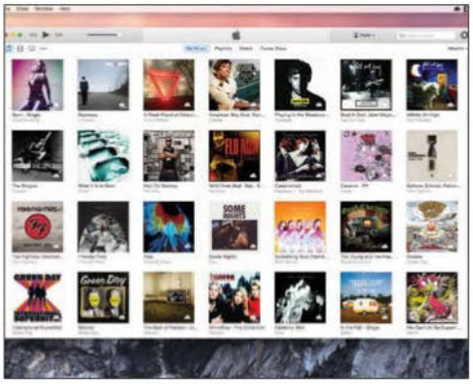
Return to iTunes

To reverse the archiving process and return albums to your iTunes account, select the Add to iTunes option. This will reverse the process and a new listing will be added to your iTunes library

Move to Trash

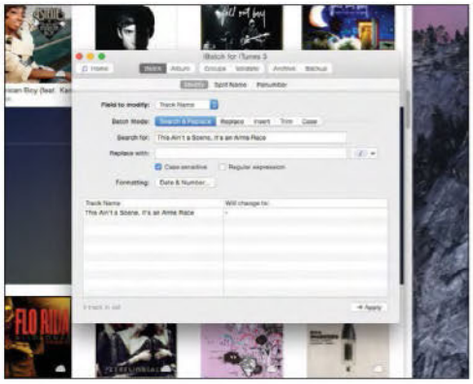
If you decide you no longer want an album you've archived, use the Move to Trash option to permanently remove it from your library. The album will be sent to the Trash app for you to delete

iBatch | Archive tunes with iBatch



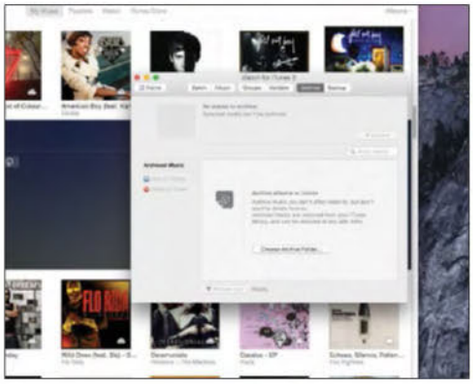
1: Scan library

Open up your iTunes account and make a mental note of all the albums you want to archive. Use the Albums tab to reformat your library to show the ones you want to see.



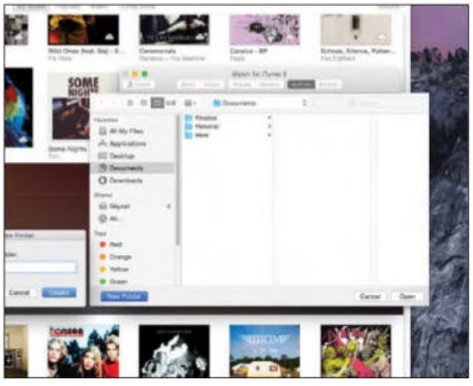
2: Sync with iBatch

Load up iBatch and follow the setting up instructions that are provided. It should automatically sync with your iTunes account and show the Ready icon when usable.



3: Set up archiving

Select the Archive tab from within iBatch. When you first access the menu, all the options will be blanked out until you add an archived song folder near the bottom of the menu.

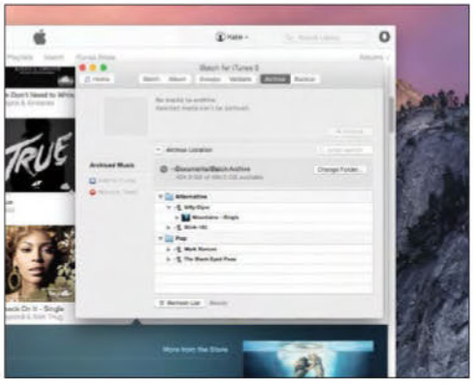


4: Create a folder

Select the Create Archived Folder option and go ahead and add a new folder onto your hard drive. Once done, head back to your iTunes account and select a song.

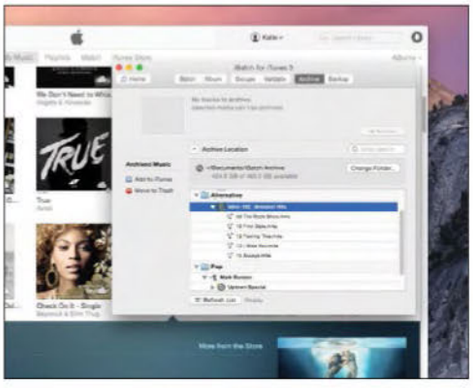
5: Start archiving

As you select a song, the name and artwork of it should be shown within iBatch. Press on the Archive button once you've selected the songs and wait for the archive to finish.



6: Make a list

When you add further songs to your archive library, you'll see folders and artists appear in the iBatch window. Use the Refresh List option if not all stored songs are appearing.



7: Move to Trash

If there is a song you'd rather permanently delete, select it within iBatch and press the Move to Trash option. This will remove the archive completely from your Mac.

8: Edit details

If certain songs aren't being stored in the correct genre while in iBatch, use the Album button to change some of its details. The song should automatically reformat itself.

9: Create a backup

Backing up large quantities of albums is quicker than manually archiving. Select the Backup option and add all of the songs you'd like to back up to your Mac.

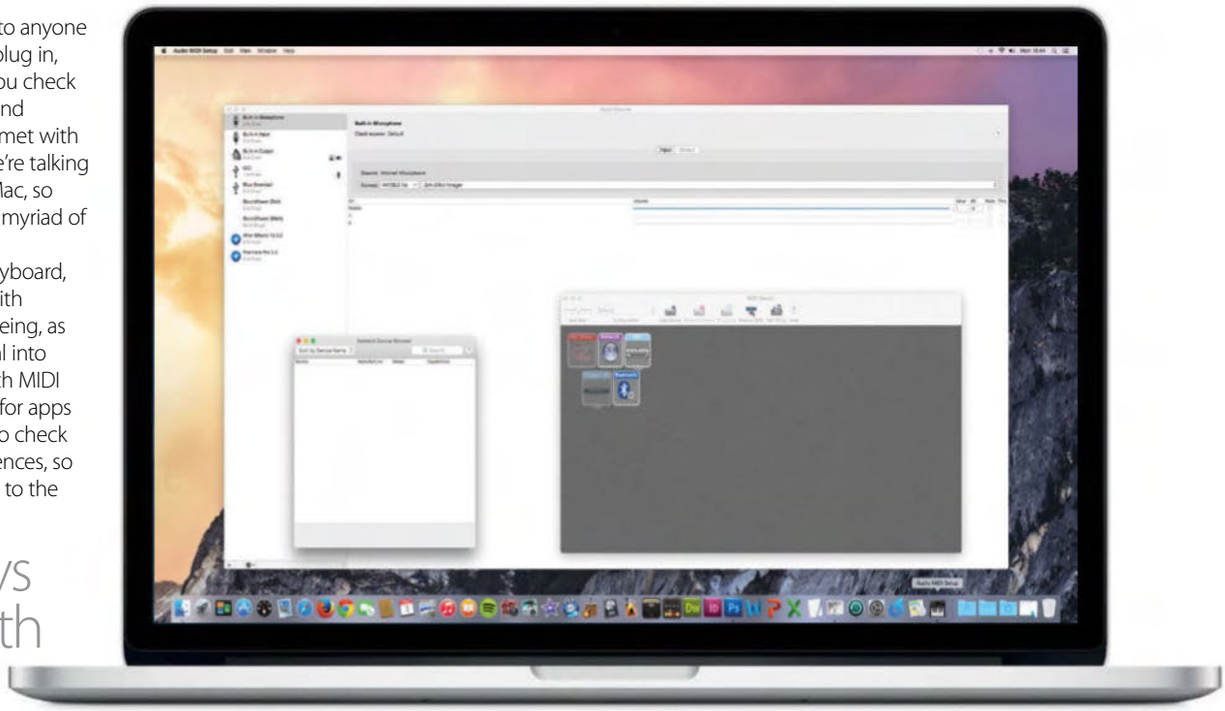
Fix sound problems in Audio MIDI Setup

Troubleshoot your MIDI miseries using the built-in sound utilities within OS X Yosemite

There's nothing quite as frustrating to anyone recording sound on a Mac than to plug in, play and hear absolutely nothing. You check all the connections multiple times and everything appears fine, only to be met with a wall of silence. Specifically here we're talking about MIDI-based input into your Mac, so your input could be coming from a myriad of USB/FireWire instruments.

Typically you might be using a keyboard, MIDI drums or even MIDI guitar – with built-in or external interface. Point being, as long as you are getting a valid signal into OS X, there are ways of tinkering with MIDI settings and ensuring you're set up for apps like GarageBand and Logic. We'll also check on Sound settings in System Preferences, so beginners and experts alike can get to the bottom of any problems.

"There are ways of tinkering with MIDI settings"



Exploring Audio MIDI Setup

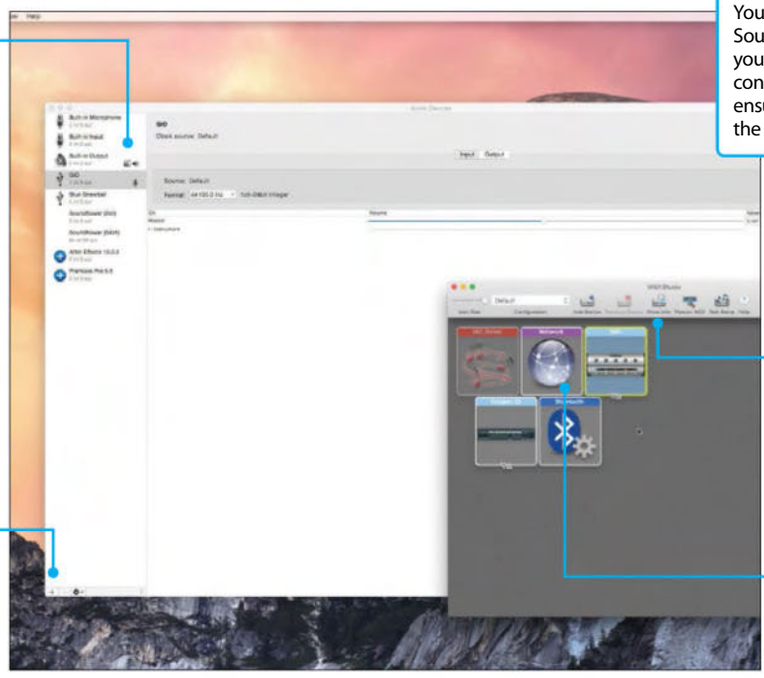
Identify the key interface and the tools found within

Audio device list

Your available audio (non-MIDI) devices show here. Click to view available input/output channels, where you can set precise volume levels or mute. You may also raise available sampling rates (Hz) in line with device support

System Preferences

The Sound options within OS X's System Preferences are limited to connected audio devices, as opposed to MIDI controllers. You'll also find virtual interfaces such as SoundFlower, but essentially the options let you toggle input/output. Since they're master controls, however, you should check here to ensure your desired devices are selected at the right volume if all you hear is silence!



Show info button

Select a device icon and hit the Show Info button to obtain a pop-up window for editing the description, but also checking ports and whether the device is online

Add and configure devices

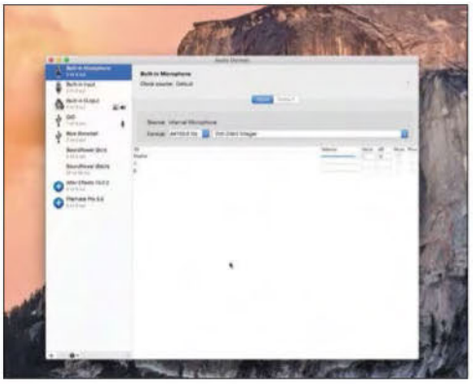
The Add button (+) lets you aggregate several audio devices, combining them to increase audio capacity without the need for additional equipment. Alongside is a settings menu where you may also configure surround speaker configurations

MIDI Studio panel

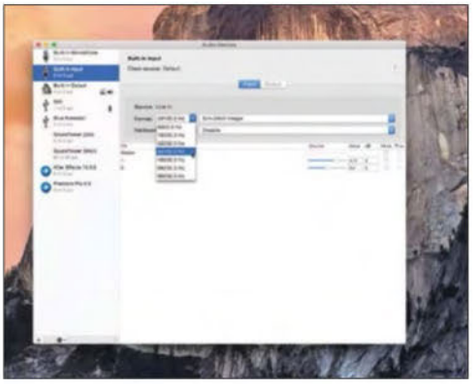
MIDI Studio is the MIDI hub and should detect all connected MIDI devices automatically. If it has been found, you'll see an icon thumbnail. If it's not there, you can press the Rescan MIDI button

Audio MIDI Setup | Get studio-quality sound

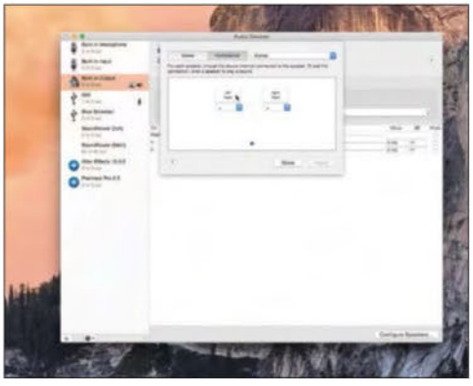
1: Launch Audio MIDI Setup
Audio MIDI Setup extends System Preferences' audio options, adding tools for connected devices. You can access it via Spotlight or within the Utilities folder of Applications.



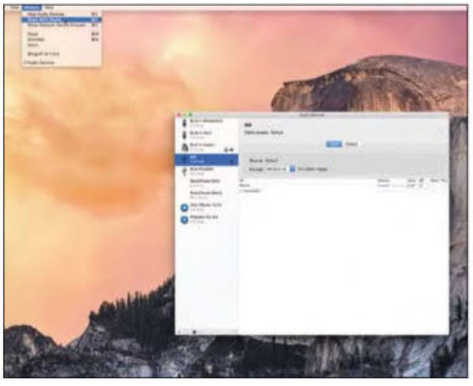
2: Audio Devices window
This default window opens to list your Audio Devices, both those built-in and others currently connected. The panel on the left lists and describes each detected device.



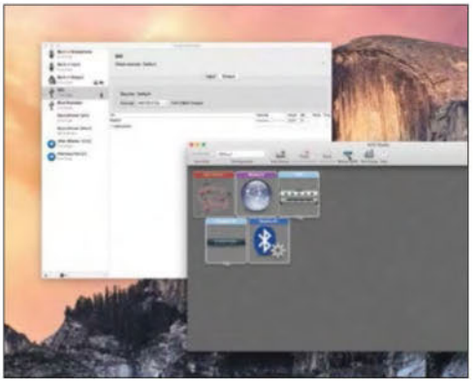
3: Playing with channels
Click a device and available channels for the selected device's input or output appear. These settings should be optimal by default, but you can manually alter volume and sampling rate.



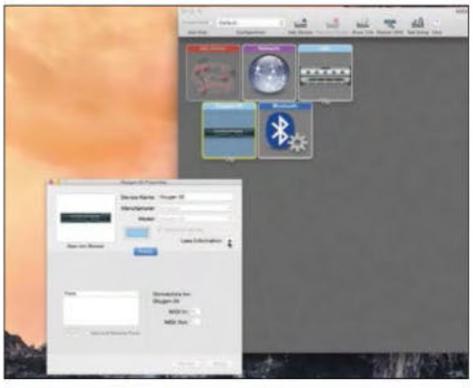
4: Configure speakers
Right-click a device and choose Configure Speakers. Here you can tweak stereo or multichannel setups, typically external surround systems. Click the speaker to sound a tone.



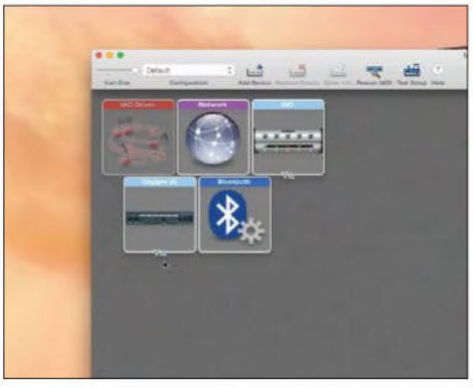
5: MIDI Studio access
The MIDI options are accessed via Window> Show MIDI Studio. This panel shows connected MIDI devices, network and Bluetooth sources – all as thumbnail icons you can examine.



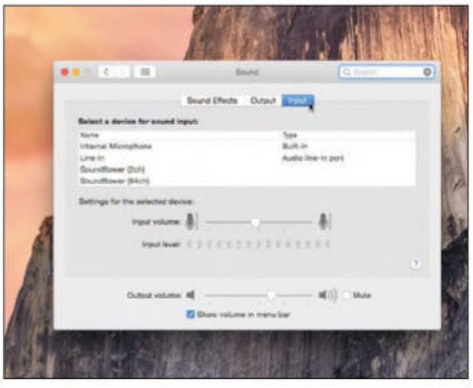
6: MIDI Studio window
If a device is found, it will be represented as an icon. You can manually add and configure an external device by clicking Add Device, or Rescan MIDI to refresh the list.



7: Show Info
Select a device, highlighting it in blue, and press the Show Info button. A dialog offers naming options, while also showing whether the device is online, along with port settings.



8: Test Setup
Toggle the Test Setup button on and press the buttons on your MIDI controller, such as the keys on a keyboard. The input arrow on the device icon should flash blue, sounding a tone.



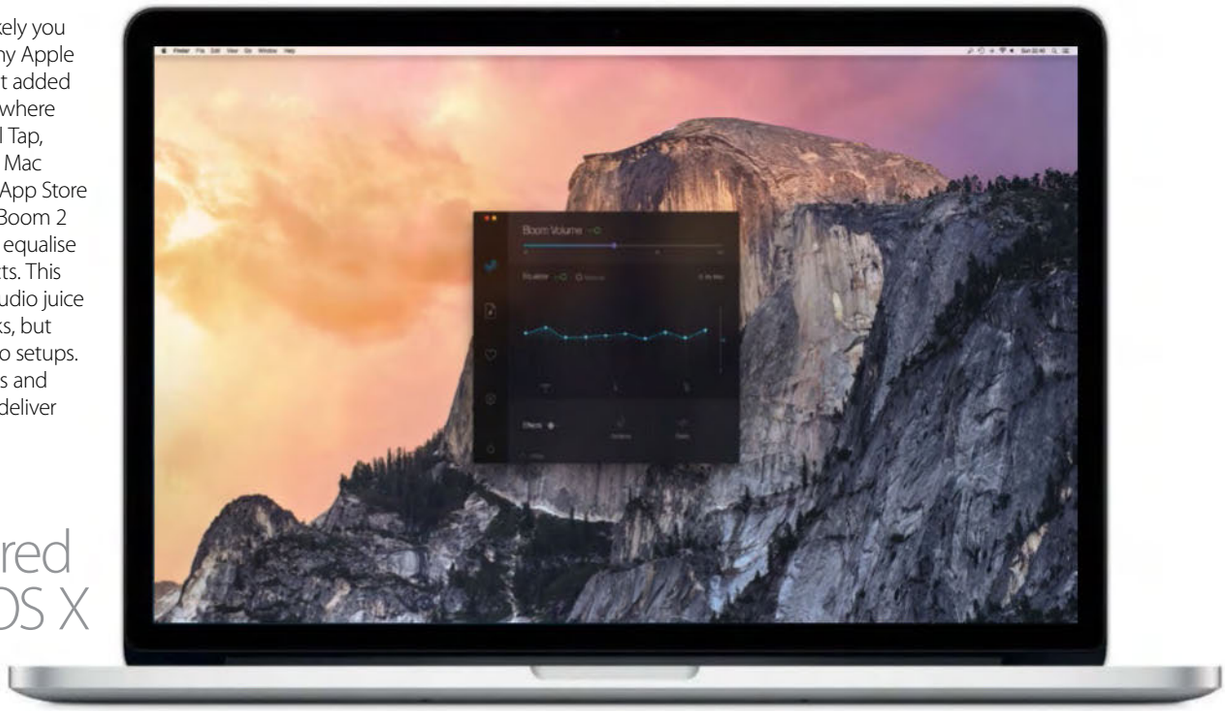
9: System sound preferences
Most sound issues stem from not having your correct audio input/output device selected, unmuted or at the correct volume. Find the master controls under System Preferences.

Enhance your Mac's audio output

Master audio boosting, enhanced equalisation and add effects with Boom 2

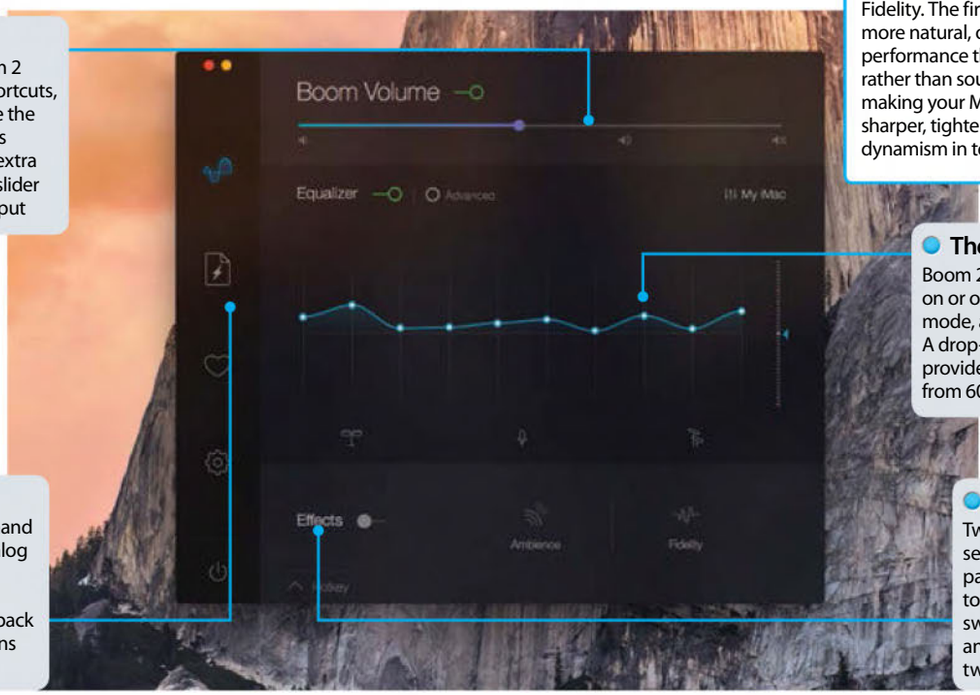
When it comes to audio, it's most likely you already think your Mac, or indeed any Apple device, sounds great. But if you want added audio performance from your Mac, where can you go? Well to reference Spinal Tap, Boom 2 is an app designed to push Mac audio to 11. Available from the Mac App Store and engineered for OS X Yosemite, Boom 2 boasts features to enhance volume, equalise system sound and add special effects. This makes it ideal for squeezing more audio juice out of smaller speakers on MacBooks, but also delivering more punch to studio setups. We'll examine those core capabilities and explain how and why they work to deliver more bang for your buck.

"Boom 2 has been engineered especially for OS X Yosemite"



Beneath Boom 2's bonnet

Picking out the core elements of the app's compact interface



Boom volume

Also accessible via the Boom 2 Taskbar icon and Hotkey shortcuts, this volume control is where the basic volume boosting takes place. The switch turns the extra amplification off, while the slider affords control over the output

Side panel

This icon panel on the left-hand side of the main Boom 2 dialog allows navigation between Volume and Equaliser, File Boosting, Sharing and feedback options, plus Settings options for tweaking the app

Ambience and Fidelity

As far as special audio effects go, Boom 2 has two presets called Ambience and Fidelity. The first is all about delivering a more natural, organic and live-sounding performance that hopefully surrounds you rather than sounding flat. Fidelity is about making your Mac sound clearer, delivering sharper, tighter and crispy tones for more dynamism in terms of the output range.

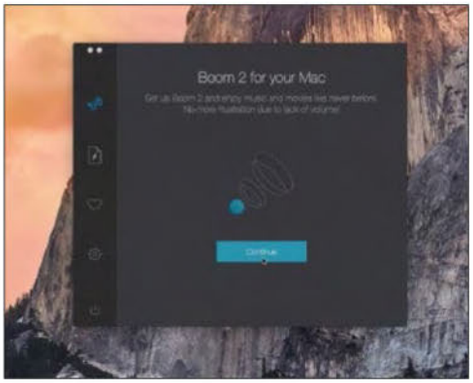
The equaliser

Boom 2's equaliser can be toggled on or off and features an advanced mode, allowing for finer tuning. A drop-down menu to the right provides a list of popular presets from 60's to Vocals and many more

Effects

Two special audio effects are selectable at the bottom of the panel. Again these can first be toggled on or off before simply switching between Ambience and Fidelity modes using the two handy icon buttons

Boom 2 | Get your Mac sounding better

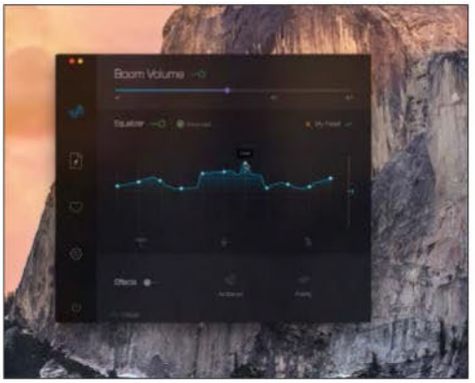


1: Set up Boom 2

Initially, the app runs a short system detection and configuration process. After installing the Audio component, click the Continue button on the main Equaliser tab.

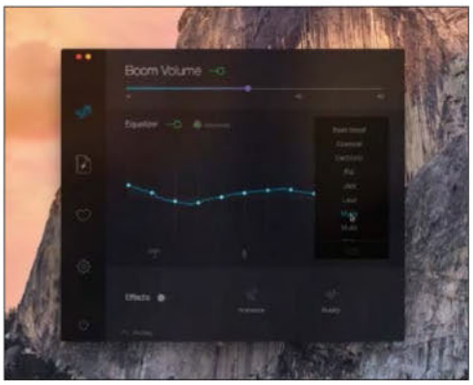
2: Boom Volume setting

The first control on the Equaliser tab is for Boom Volume, where current system volume is boosted. This can be toggled off and raised or decreased via the slider.



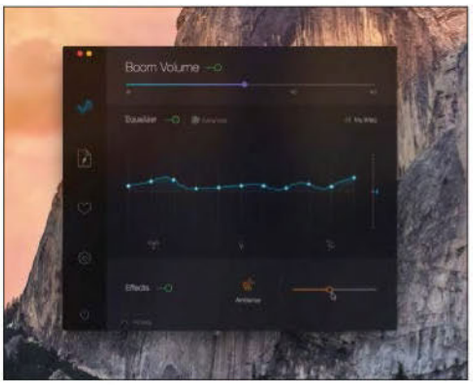
3: The equaliser

A graphic equaliser lets you manually drag frequency points up or down the Hz/kHz scale, with sound ranges isolated via icon buttons for bass, vocals and treble.



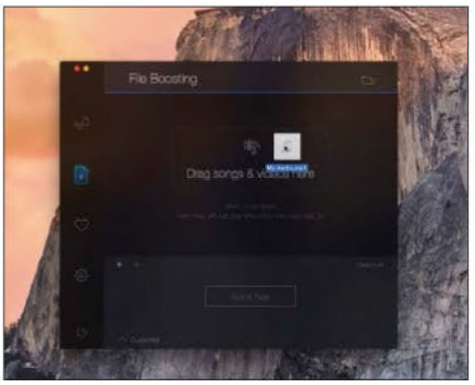
4: Equaliser presets

Once confirmed, manual edits can be named and saved to a preset list to the right. Use this drop-down to select suggested equaliser curves for popular performance styles.



5: Extra effects

Lastly on this panel you can toggle between Ambience and Fidelity effects using the twin icon buttons. Click the arrows to access the level sliders and set levels.



6: File boosting

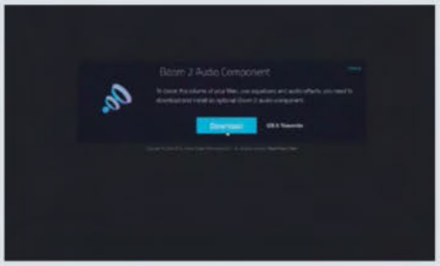
Drag audio or video files onto the File Boosting panel, click the button and Boom 2 saves a 'boosted' copy. The Customize options set file suffix and destination.

Audio plug-in

Download an extra component

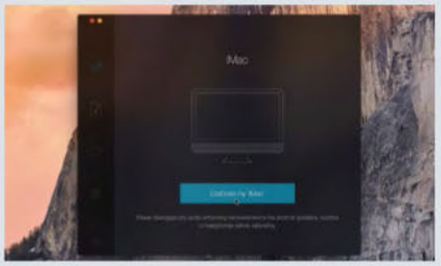
The Mac App Store version of Boom 2 requires the download and installation of an additional audio component to calibrate your system sound and provide access to the core volume, equaliser and effects features. Here we'll look at that set-up process and what is involved to 'get booming' on every Yosemite Mac system when you first fire up the app. It's nothing to worry about, and very straightforward to get up and running…

"The App Store version of Boom 2 requires an audio component"



1: Device installer

The initial Boom 2 prompt stipulates the download of an audio component via a website link. Click on the button and the device installer ZIP will be placed on your desktop. Unpack this and then you can launch the package.



2: Calibrate and Boom!

With the device component installed, Boom 2 will prompt you to run the calibration. The app will automatically determine optimum system performance, advising first to disconnect any additional audio devices or headphones.

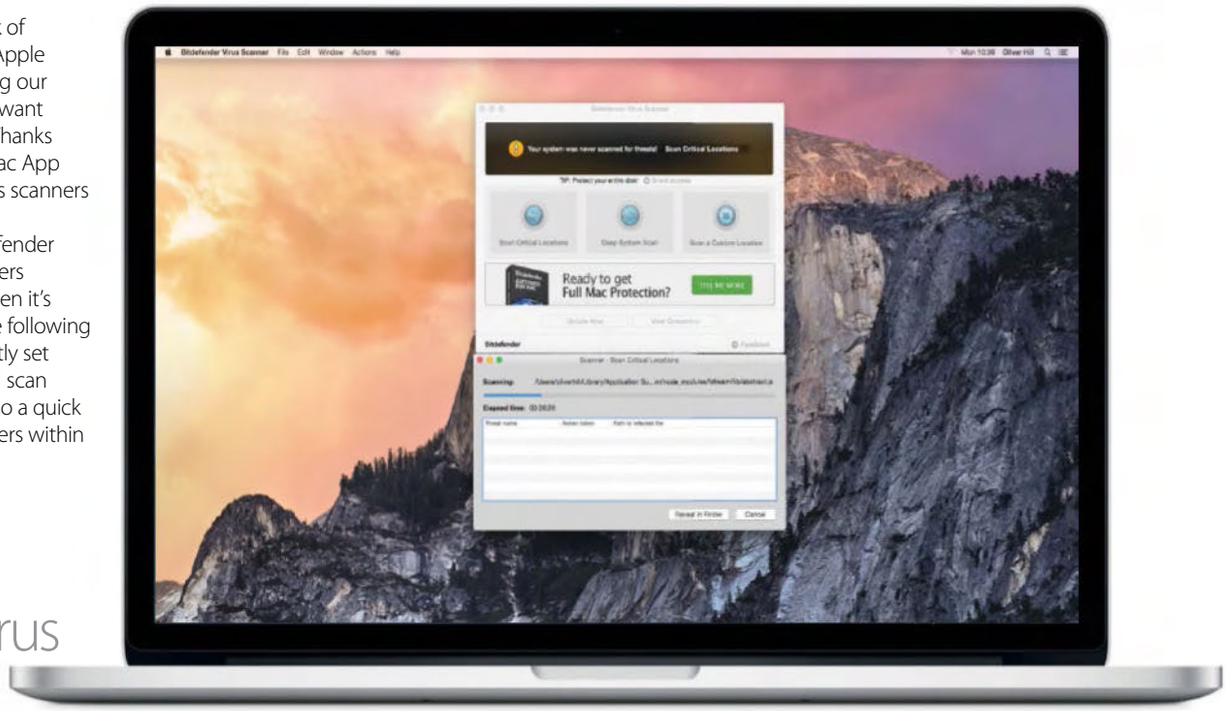
Scan and quarantine malware in OS X

Remove potential threats from your Mac with the help of this powerful virus scanner

The way OS X is built means the risk of getting a virus on your Mac is low. Apple has done a very good job at keeping our machines protected, but many will want to strive for added peace of mind. Thanks to the constant expansion of the Mac App Store, there's now a plethora of virus scanners available to download.

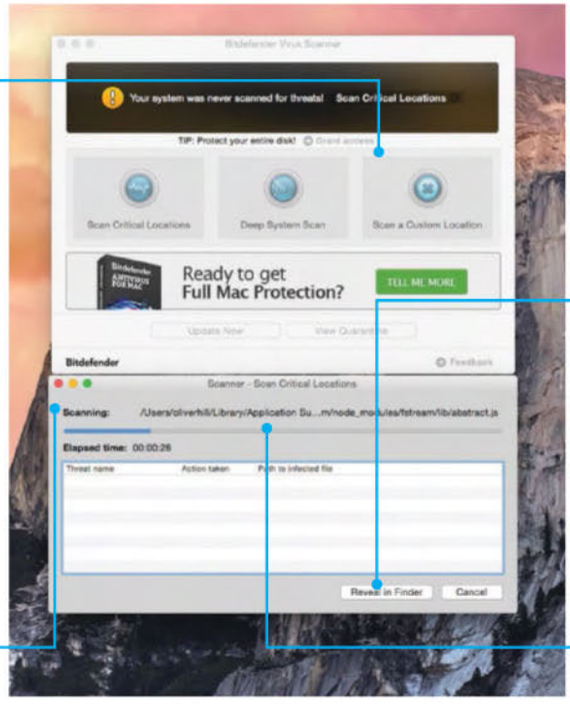
We highly recommend the Bitdefender Virus Scanner above all other scanners on the App Store, even more so when it's completely free to download. In the following steps we'll show you how to correctly set up the app and how to start a small scan before a full system scan. There's also a quick guide on setting scanning parameters within Bitdefender as well.

"We highly recommend Bitdefender Virus Scanner"



Set up system scans

Know your options when it comes to protecting your Mac



Type of scan

Although a Deep System Scan is highly recommended, scanning a Custom Location is ideal if you want to perform a quick scan of a highly vulnerable area of your machine

Scheduled scans

The app includes a Scheduled Scan feature so that your machine will systematically scan for malware at a designated time. In principle, it's best to set up a scheduled scan when you know you'll be away from your Mac, as you can encounter some noticeable lag when you use your Mac alongside a scan running simultaneously.

Deal with malware

Hopefully you'll never find a malicious file, but if you do, it'll be listed under the Threat Name tab. To take a closer look at the file and thus delete it, select the Reveal in Finder option that's provided

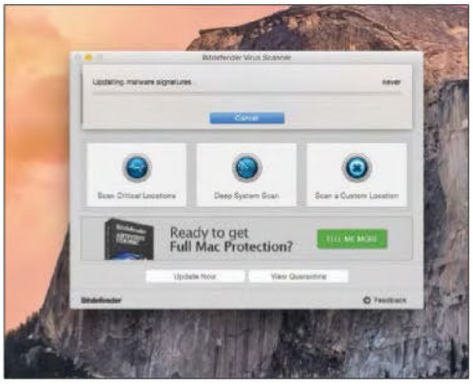
Scanning progress

Use the timebar to track how long your scan has currently taken. You'll find that performing a Deep System Scan can take up to an hour to complete, depending on how many files are stored on your machine

Which file?

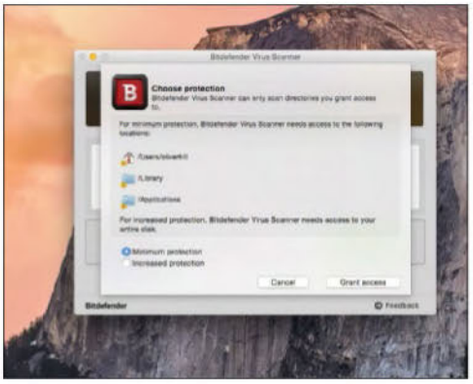
Above the timer you'll find an overview of where the app is currently scanning. It's good to keep an eye on this bar just to track its progress. The app will scan some areas a lot quicker than others

Bitdefender Virus Scanner | Scan and remove malicious files



1: Update definitions

When you first open up the app, select the Update Now option. This will give the app the latest virus definitions, which helps identify some of the latest malware and virus threats.



2: Perform a custom scan

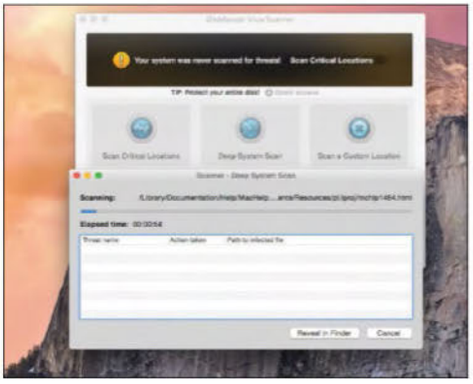
Go ahead and select the Custom Scan option. A custom scan can be tailored to your exact needs, depending on the areas you want to be scanned and how long you want it to take.

3: Select apps

Now go ahead and select all the apps and directories that you want scanned. After you've put together your list, select the Open button and then Scan on the next menu.

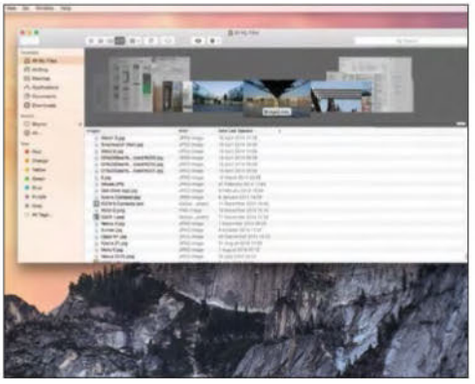
4: Track the scan

The scan will now begin and you'll be able to track its progress at the bottom. If at any point you want to stop the scan, use the Cancel option that's provided within the app.



5: Deep scan

As an alternate, select the Deep Scan option to undertake a full and detailed scan of your Mac. If you've noticed some slowdown, this is a great way of finding the problem.



6: Infected files

If the scan finds an infected file, select the Reveal in Finder option in order to open the file's directory. By selecting it here, you can now permanently delete it from your Mac.

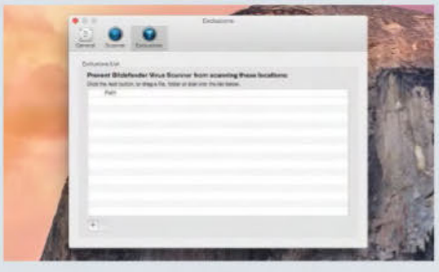
Add scanning exclusions

Prevent unnecessary scanning

There are certain locations on your Mac that you may find don't need to be scanned by Bitdefender at all, however by default, these areas will still undergo the scanning progress.

A great workaround to stop this excess scanning from taking place is to go ahead and set up exclusions. Doing so will stop the app from scanning specific folders in the future and ultimately makes each scan a little quicker.

"Setting up exclusions will prevent excess scanning occurring"



1: Device installer

With the Bitdefender app open, select the Preferences option from the toolbar. Now you can select the Exclusions option from the box that appears before pressing on the + icon at the bottom left of the screen to add additional folders.

2: Calibrate and Boom!

An overview of your apps and various folders will now appear. Select one and then choose the Open option from the app to permanently remove it from all future scans you complete within the Bitdefender app.

Create an emergency OS X boot drive

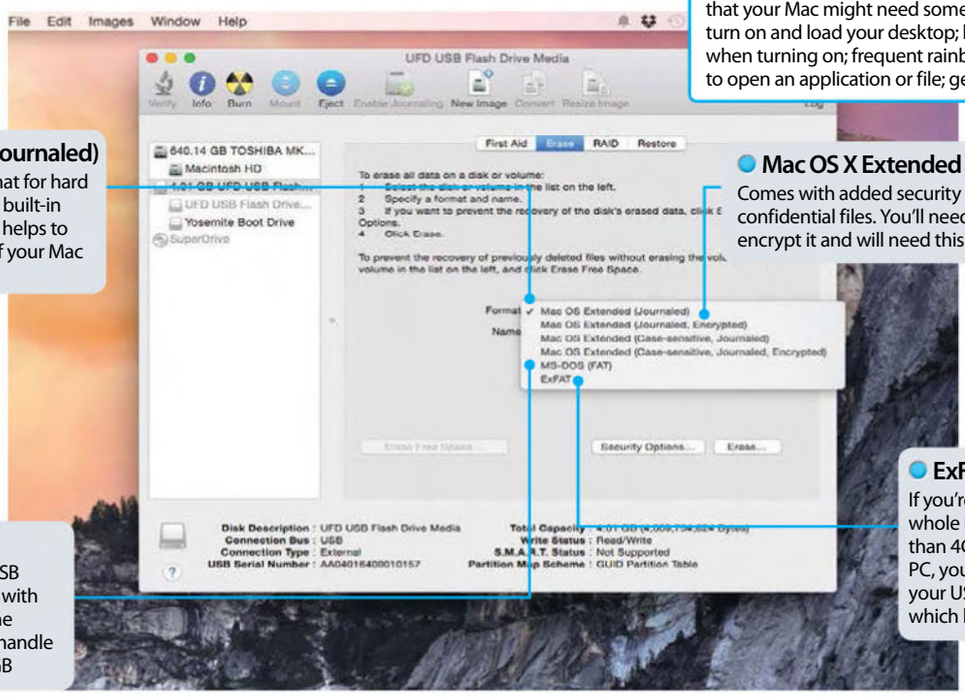
Copy your recovery partition to a USB stick so you can re-install your operating system

In the fast-moving world of technology, CD drives are now a thing of the past – and that means the death of the recovery disk. So what do you do if you need to re-install your operating system? Mac OS X creates a 'recovery partition' on your hard drive when it installs Mac OS X Yosemite. The recovery partition contains the installer for the operating system on another part of your hard drive, separate from your main hard drive. However, if your hard drive fails completely, where does this leave you? Fortunately, there is a way to prepare for this: create your own recovery disk using a USB flash drive. All you need is a USB drive with 8GB of space and a little bit of Disk Utility know-how…

"All you need is a bit of know-how and an 8GB USB flash drive"

Drive formats explained

A look at the different formats you can apply to hard drives



Mac OS X Extended (Journaled)

This is the most common format for hard drives used with Macs. It has a built-in feature called 'journaling' that helps to avoid corruption of your files if your Mac turns off unexpectedly

Mac OS X Extended (Journaled, Encrypted)

Comes with added security – perfect if you've got confidential files. You'll need to set up a password to encrypt it and will need this every time you connect

MSDOS-FAT

A great format to use if your USB flash drive is going to be used with both PCs and Macs. There's one drawback though: it can only handle individual file sizes of up to 4GB

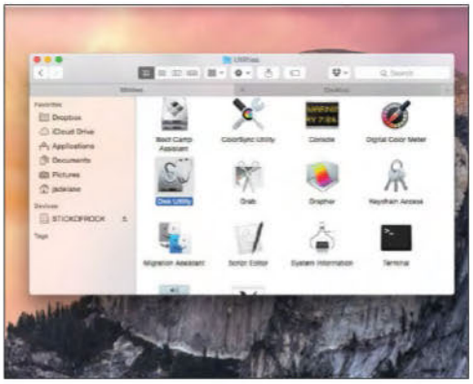
ExFAT

If you're planning on sharing a whole heap of large files bigger than 4GB between your Mac and PC, you're best off formatting your USB flash drive into ExFAT, which has no file size limitations

Tell-tale signs of an unhappy Mac

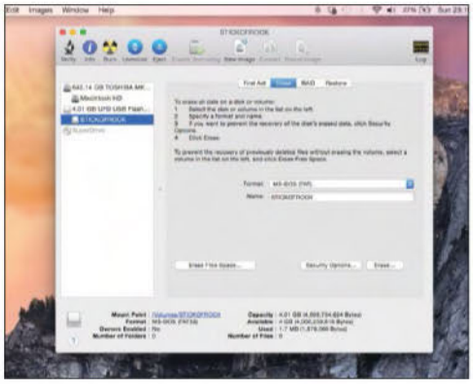
Hopefully you won't ever need to call upon your new emergency Yosemite drive, but here are a few warning signs that your Mac might need some TLC: your Mac is slow to turn on and load your desktop; hangs at the spinning gear when turning on; frequent rainbow pinwheels when trying to open an application or file; general lag and slowness.

Disk Utility | Create an emergency boot drive



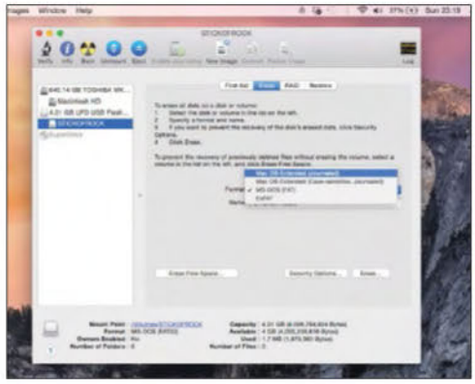
1: Open Disk Utility

Connect your USB flash drive and wait for it to appear on your desktop. Launch your Applications folder and navigate to Utilities. Double-click to launch the Disk Utility app.



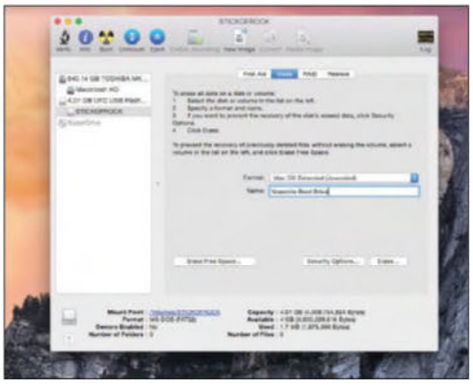
2: Find your drive

Next, select your USB drive from the list of devices in the left-hand column. Then click on the Erase tab, which is displayed on the right-hand side of the main app interface.



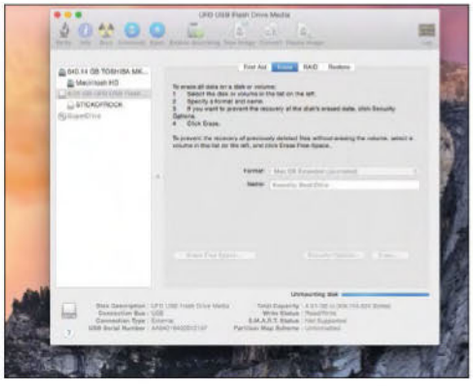
3: Format your drive

From the drop-down next to the Format heading, select Mac OS X Extended (Journaled). This formats your drive in a way that it can be read and written to by your Mac.



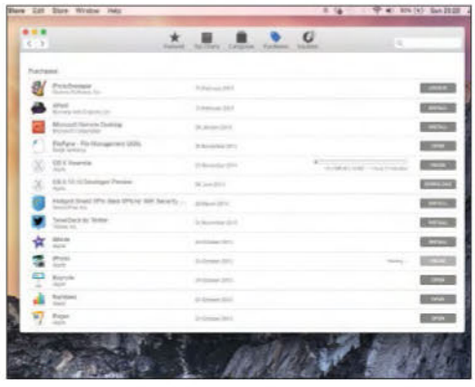
4: Give it a name

Give your boot drive a name by clicking in the Name: field. If you're stuck for ideas – you don't need to get too creative with it – 'Yosemite Boot Drive' is a good place to start!



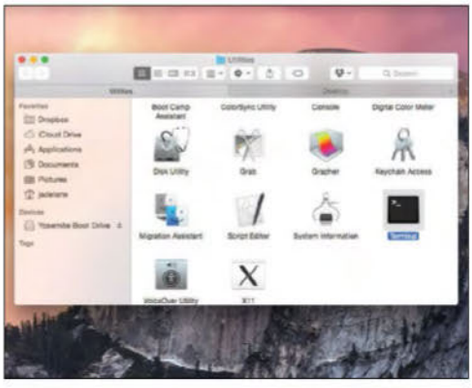
5: Wipe it clean

Click Erase. Your USB drive will be erased and set up as new. Next, eject and re-connect your drive to ensure that the erase has worked. Your drive will appear on the Desktop.



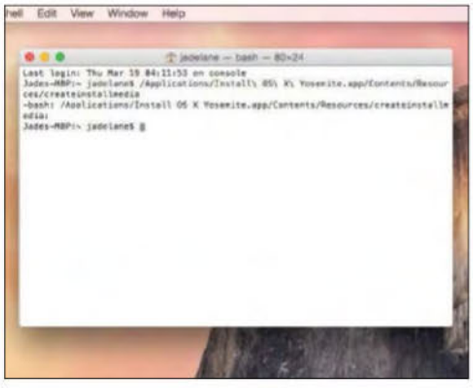
6: Download Yosemite installer

Head to the App Store and sign in by clicking Store>Sign In. Click on Purchases and locate the OS X Yosemite installer. Press the Download button and wait.



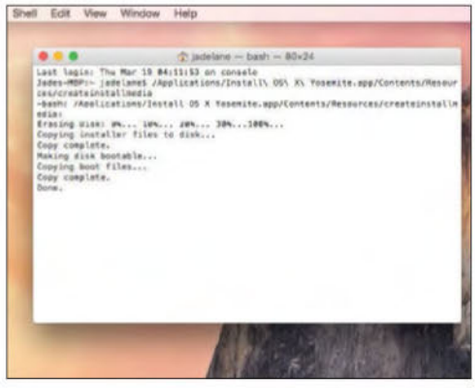
7: Open Terminal

Head back to your Applications folder. Open the Utilities folder and double-click to launch Terminal. Warning: things are about to get tricky, so pay close attention to the next steps!



8: Go command-o!

In Terminal, type: /Applications/Install\ OS\ X\ Yosemite.app/Contents/Resources/createinstallmedia. Press the Enter key. Terminal will install Yosemite to your drive.



9: Eject and test

Once Terminal alerts you that the installation has finished, you can eject your USB drive. Don't forget to store it somewhere safe, so you can easily find it and use it when needed.

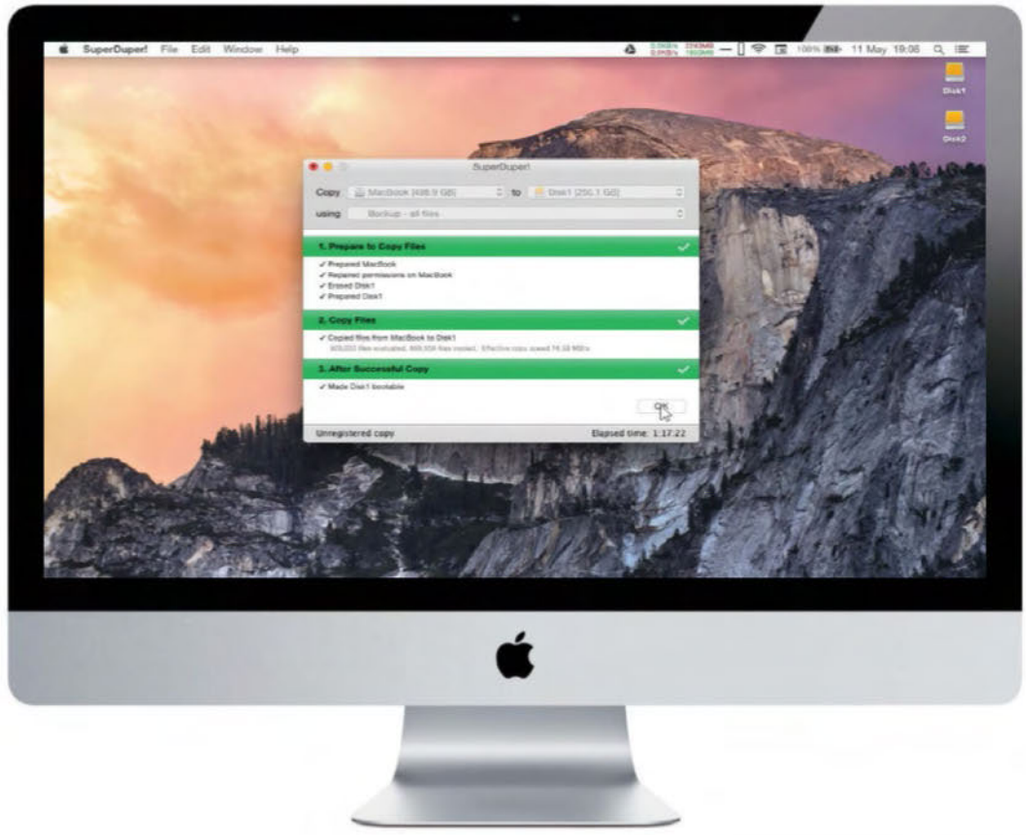
Clone your disk drive with SuperDuper!

Create a USB backup disk you can boot from in the event of a disaster with this free tool

Time Machine is a great back-up tool and it is certainly the first place to go when you lose files because you can easily find and restore them. It is not the only back-up solution, though, and SuperDuper! is an excellent alternative. It clones the Mac's internal disk to a USB drive and makes an exact copy. If the Mac's disk fails, you can boot from the USB disk and either carry on working or clone it back to the Mac.

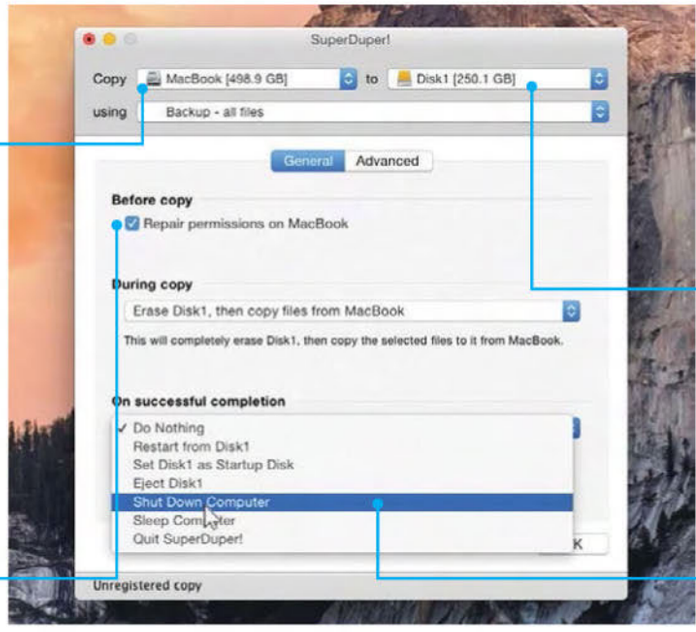
It is an insurance policy in case of the nightmare scenario of a disk failure. The free version from **shirt-pocket.com** is used in the tutorial and if you register, it unlocks extra features. For example, you can schedule backups, and after the initial backup you can just back up any changes.

"Time Machine is a great tool SuperDuper! is an excellent alternative"



Configure SuperDuper!

Make sure the options are set correctly for cloning the disk



Source disk

Any disk can be cloned, but by default, SuperDuper! selects the disk you started the Mac from. In this case it is the internal disk drive. When cloning back it is the USB disk

Fix disk faults

Minor errors on the Mac's disk drive are common. Ticking this option will check the Mac's disk drive for faults and automatically repair them

Is it really cloned?

No. What SuperDuper! does is to copy all the essential files on the disk – it does not copy everything. The cloned disk contains all files required to start and run OS X, along with all your personal files. It does not copy the Trash for example, or various caches that OS X and apps make because they are not necessary.

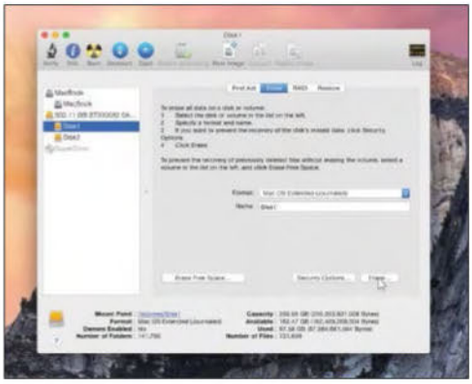
Destination disk

A copy of the source disk will be saved to the disk selected in this list. Make sure the right one is selected and do not overwrite a Time Machine backup disk

Select an action

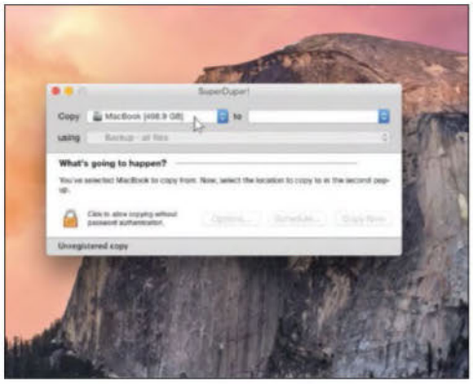
Cloning the disk can take hours. For this reason, set it going at the end of the day and select an action such as Shut Down Computer or Sleep Computer

SuperDuper! | Clone the internal disk drive



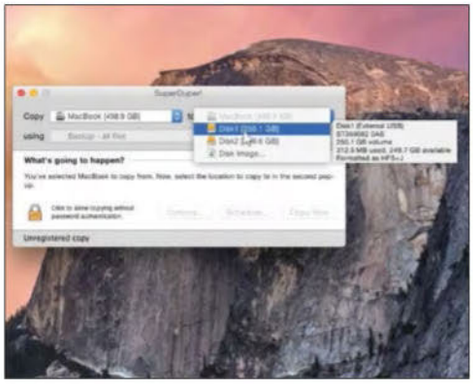
1: Format the disk

Any USB drive will do, but it might need formatting using Disk Utility in the Utilities folder. Select the disk, set Format to Mac OS Extended (Journaled), and click Erase.



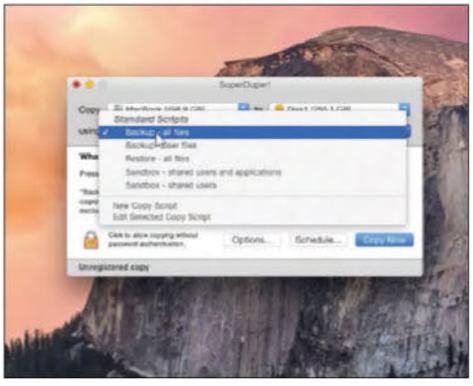
2: Start SuperDuper!

After downloading SuperDuper! from shirt-pocket.com and copying it to the Applications folder, run it. Where it says Copy at the top, select the Mac's internal disk drive.



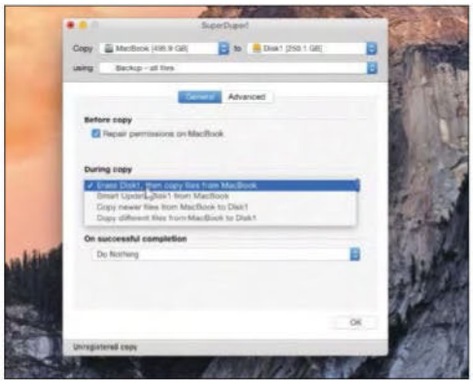
3: Set the destination

The Mac's disk is the source and now you must select the destination for the clone. The disk does not need to be exactly the same size, just big enough for all the files.



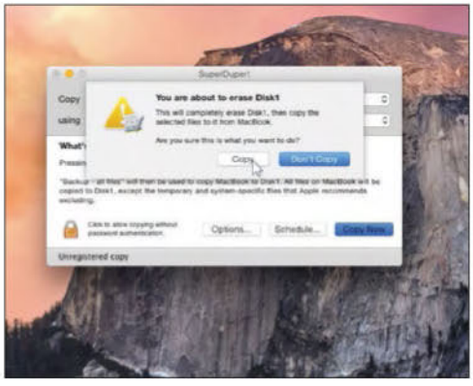
4: Select the script

SuperDuper! can be used in many different ways, and it also runs scripts. The one we want, 'Backup – all files', is usually selected by default, but make sure to select it if not.



5: Set the options

Click the Options button and tick 'Repair permissions on MacBook'. This checks for faults. In the During Copy list, only the first item is available in the free version.



6: Final check

Click the Copy Now button and enter your administrator password. Take note of the warning. You are about to erase a disk, so make sure it is the right one. Click Copy.

Test out your cloned disk drive

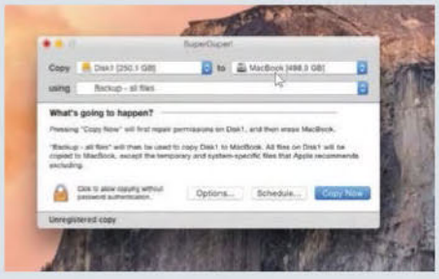
Check your drive is in working order

After creating a cloned disk drive, it is a good idea to test it straight away by booting from it. It is important to practice this task because if disaster strikes, you will need it to recover from whatever disk fault you have. The first step here shows how to select the newly created cloned disk. If you do not see it listed, unplug the USB cable and then plug it back in.

"If disaster strikes, you'll need it to recover from whatever fault you have"

1: Pick a disk

Switch on the Mac and as soon as the grey screen appears, hold down the Option key. Select the cloned disk with the arrow keys and press Enter. The Mac will boot up from it instead of your default disk.



2: Clone it back

If the worst happens and your Mac's disk fails or has to be replaced, you can clone the USB disk back to the Mac's internal drive. Just set the source to the USB disk and the destination to the Mac's disk.

Record your iOS device on a Mac

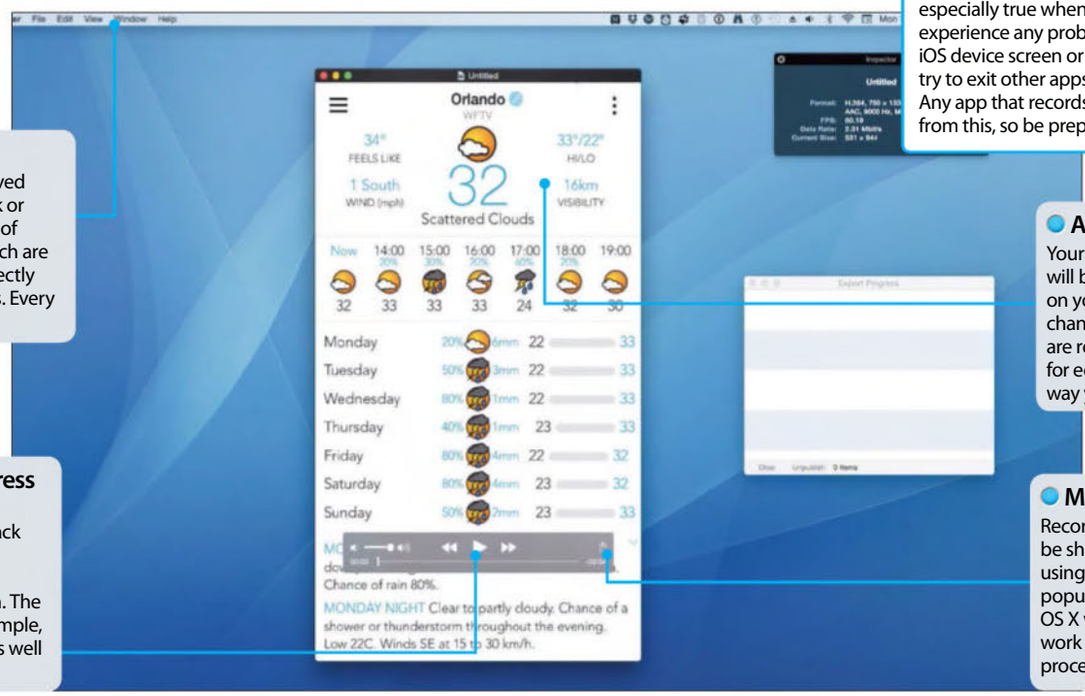
You really can capture everything that is happening on your iOS device in real-time. No extra software is required

It used to be the case that recording your iPhone or iPad screen on a Mac required either jailbreaking your device or using a complex setup, but with the release of Yosemite and iOS 8, you can now do so using the included QuickTime software. Despite the fact that it is designed to make movies for personal use, the ability to select a USB-connected iOS device is available via a tiny icon next to the record button. We will explain the full process for setting up the connection and recording your iOS screen movements, and then cover how to save or export your creations. The uses for this simple solution are vast in number and it should cater for professionals and everyone else in equal measure.

"Record your iOS screen movements and save them"

A simple recorder

Capture your iOS device in real-time



A smooth experience

QuickTime Player can at times use substantial system resources and this is especially true when recording. If you experience any problems recording your iOS device screen or even connecting to it, try to exit other apps to free up some RAM. Any app that records movies can suffer from this, so be prepared before you start.

Other options

Movie files can be saved to your Mac hard disk or exported in a variety of formats, some of which are tailored to work perfectly on iPhones and iPads. Every base is covered well

A perfect recreation

Your iOS device's screen will be perfectly recreated on your Mac, and all changes and movements are recorded in real-time for editing and using in any way you like

See your progress

You can monitor the recording and playback process without ever interrupting what is happening on screen. The entire procedure is simple, efficient and works as well as you could wish for

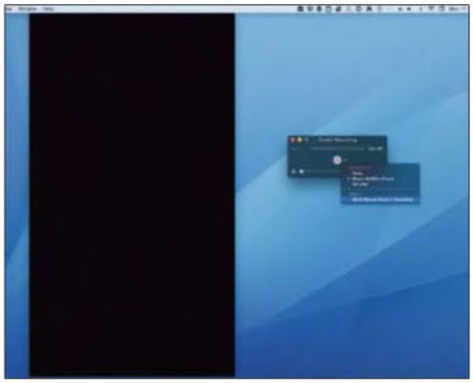
Movie sharing

Recorded iOS movies can be shared in an instant using all of the most popular services. Mac OS X will do all of the hard work for you and make the process exceptionally easy

QuickTime Player | Record an iOS device screen

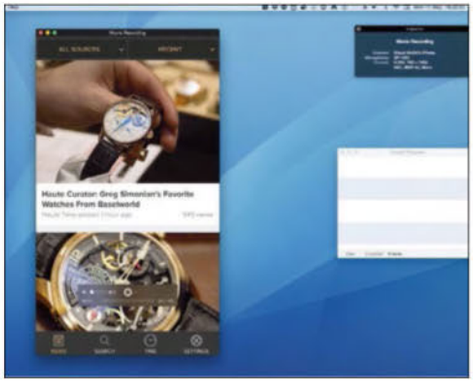
1: It's all free
It may be expected to pay for an app to record your iPhone or iPad screen on a Mac, but all you need to do is open QuickTime Player and connect your device via USB.

2: Choose your device
Go to File and then select 'New movie recording' to begin, at which point the standard QuickTime window will appear. Now click the small arrow next to the record button.



3: A blank screen
If the window changes but is blank, you should disconnect your iPhone from the USB cable and then reconnect. Also, try to avoid connecting via the keyboard or a USB hub.

4: An iOS screen
Once you see your device screen on your Mac, you know that it has connected correctly. Hover over the iOS image and you will see the record button appear over the top.



5: It's now recording
As QuickTime records your iOS actions in real-time, you will see the progress meter change showing the elapsed time and storage used. You can stop recording at any time.

6: Share the movie
The recorded movie can now be shared by simply clicking the sharing icon in the playback bar. A variety of services are available, including Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

7: Save the file
You can also save the recorded movie as a file for editing in another app such as iMovie. You have the potential to create a very professional presentation in minutes.

8: Exporting formats
Use File>Export to save the file and export it in various formats. You can choose 480p, 720p or 1080p and even use pre-formatted rules for iOS devices and the Apple TV.

9: The right orientation
When you open an app on your iPhone or iPad that works in landscape, QuickTime will immediately recognise the change and switch to the desired landscape orientation.

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Day One
Lifestyle
Forecast Bar - Weather ...
Weather
PaintCode 2
Developer Tools
Blogo - The blogging a...
Social Networking
Microsoft OneNote
Productivity
Mixed In Key 7.5
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Music
In-App Purchases
Pomodoro Time - Focu...
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Allocator - Manage You...
Finance
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Productivity
In-App Purchases
Clear – Tasks, Reminde...
Productivity
Logoist 2
Graphics & Design
Quick Links
All Categories
Paid
DAYONE
SHAPER
OneNote

Essential Mac Apps

There are thousands of apps available for the Mac. Here are some that every Mac user should have

Whether you use your Mac as a creative tool, for running a business or just for entertainment, there are thousands of apps to choose from, many of which compete with each other and do more or less the same job. So how do you decide which ones to use?

You might think, for example, that if you're a creative professional, the likes of Photoshop, Illustrator and Dreamweaver are a no-brainer. But that's not the case any more. While all are great tools, they're being challenged by upstarts like Pixelmator, Affinity Designer and Hype. What's more, the new kids on the block are hipper and cheaper than the de facto standard applications in their respective fields.

The advent of the Mac App Store over the last few years means that it's never been easier for Mac users to find and compare apps. But even on the App Store, there are an awful lot of mediocre apps to sift through before you come to the real gems. That's why we've put together a collection of the essential apps. Here we present 31 apps that every Mac user should at the very least consider installing on their Mac.

The apps cover a variety of fields, from business and productivity to entertainment. In each case, the apps we've highlighted are the best in their field. Some come from established big players like Microsoft and Adobe – we could hardly compile a list of essential Mac apps without them – but there are also much smaller developers that have built brilliant tools for Mac users.

The best thing of all? Several of the apps on our list are free, while others are remarkably inexpensive compared to competitor apps. So, for example, you could kit yourself out with Pixelmator, Affinity Designer and Hype for around the same as three months' subscription to Adobe's Creative Suite. Unless you work in an environment where big-name apps are mandatory, their smaller, much less expensive competitors are well worth checking out.

Business

The best apps for budgeting, presenting and managing projects

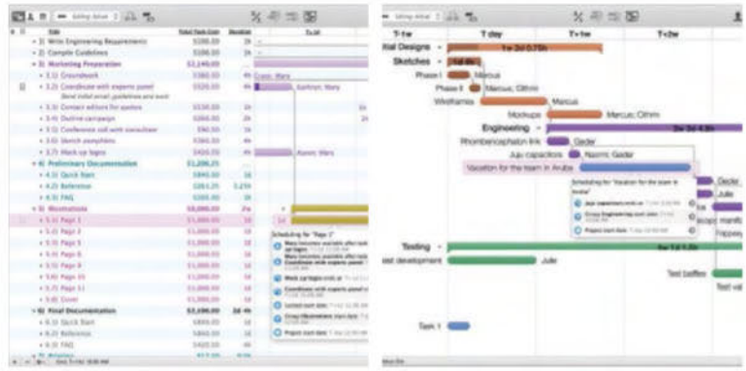
There was a time when Macs were for creative jobs like graphic design, photography and print publishing. If you wanted a computer for business, you chose a Windows PC. Not any more. Steve Jobs' deal with Microsoft in 1997, which ensured it produced at least one more version of Office for Mac, helped save Apple, but also encouraged more developers to view the Mac as a serious business computer. Now, there are hundreds of Mac business tools available, many of them a match for those on Windows. Whether you want a program to manage your accounts, plan projects, cope with the demands of business email, or enable collaboration between teams which are spread across the world, there's an application for the Mac to do it. Some of the tools here are aimed at small businesses; others at large corporations. Together, they are some of the best business apps for the Mac.

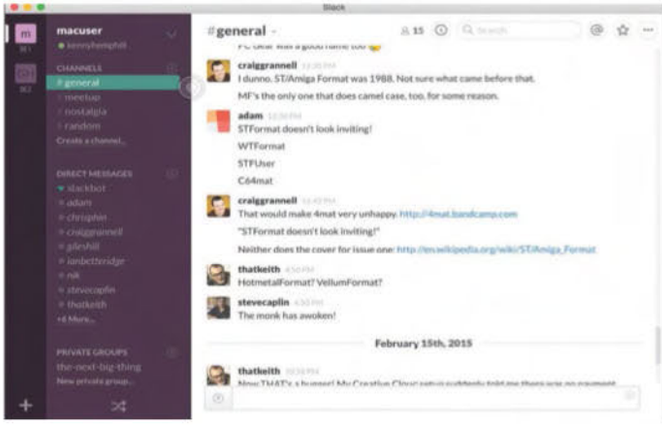
OmniPlan

Price: £149.99/$199.99

The Mac might not be blessed with as many project management tools as on Windows PCs, but when there's one which is as good as OmniPlan, you don't need an array of alternatives. Designed to allow teams to collaborate and see at a glance the status of any project, OmniPlan has a range of views, including Gantt charts and critical path analyses.

The app's friendly interface makes inputting data easy, and new features in the most recent version allow a project manager to accept or reject changes made by team members before publishing the updated project. Add in support for every file format you can imagine, and OmniPlan is unbeatable as a project management tool.





Slack

Price: Free

Slack has become something of a phenomenon. Launched in late 2013, a mere 18 months later the firm was worth over $1bn. Why? Because the app makes working in a team, no matter where each member is, brilliantly easy.

You can have multiple teams for each group you're a part of and within each team, multiple channels for different conversations. Channels can be protected so only those who know the password can use them. And you can direct-message others too.

Slack is also multi-platform, so you can always be connected, no matter what computers your associates use.

"The app makes working in a team brilliantly easy"

Wunderlist

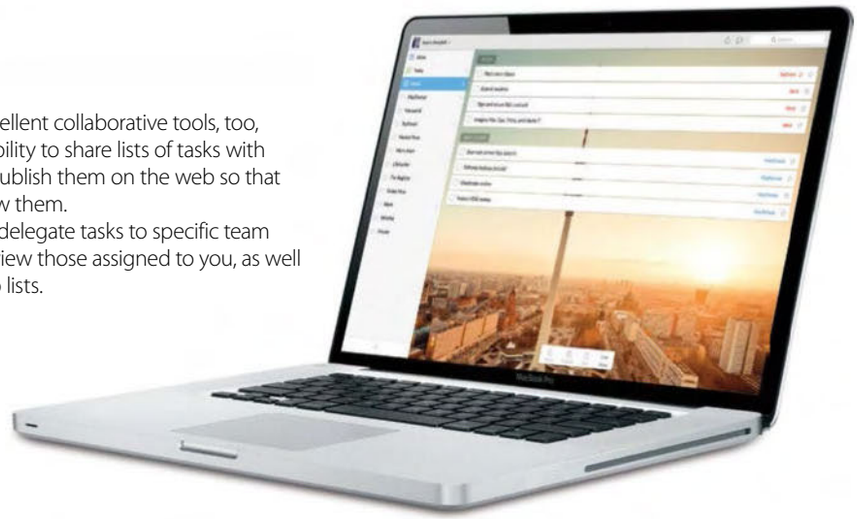
Price: Free (Pro subscription available)

When it comes to making to-do lists, scheduling tasks and setting reminders, there's no better app on the Mac than Wunderlist. As well as allowing you to create tasks and lists on your Mac, it enables you to sync them with the iPad and iPhone versions of Wunderlist, and any changes are reflected instantly.

There are excellent collaborative tools, too, including the ability to share lists of tasks with other users or publish them on the web so that anyone can view them.

You can also delegate tasks to specific team members and view those assigned to you, as well as attach files to lists.

"You can share lists of tasks with other users or publish them on the web"



Outlook for Mac

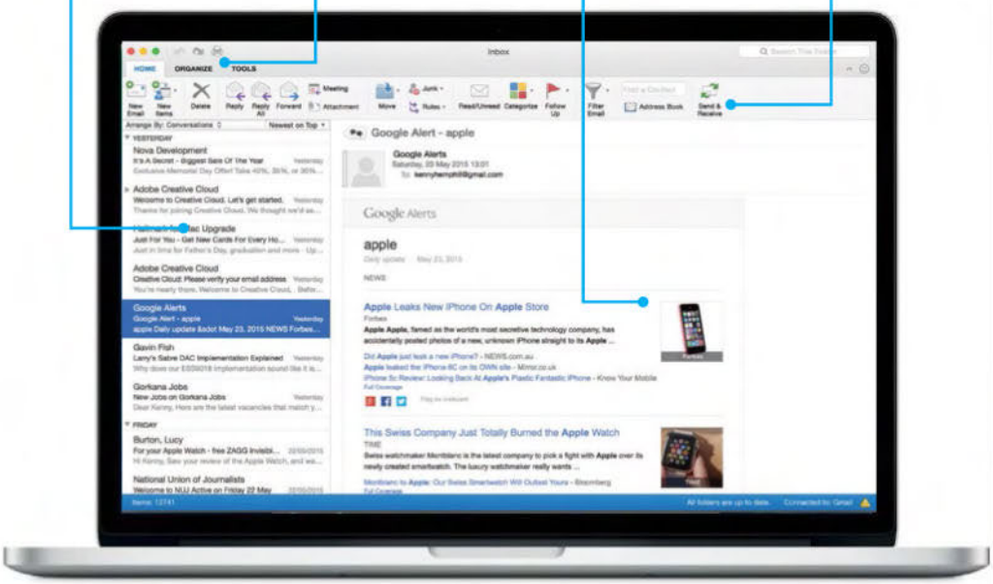
Price: From £5.99/$6.99 per month

Folders hidden by default
Outlook displays only the message list, with preview, and the reading pane. Drag the message view right to reveal the folders in a mailbox

Organize and Tools tabs
The Organize tab allows you to change the way you view your mail and run Rules. The Tools tab is used to add new accounts

Conversations in Outlook
Messages in Outlook are arranged in conversations by default. This means that the original message and replies are grouped together

Easy access to tools
Outlook's toolbar provides easy access to tools such as creating a meeting request, forwarding the email as an attachment and filtering messages



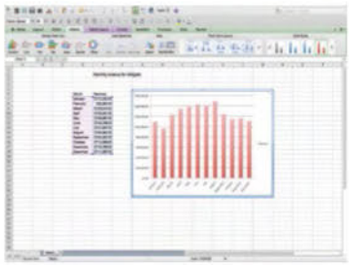
Microsoft Office 2011 for Mac

Price: £109.99/$139.99 or from £5.99/$6.99 per month

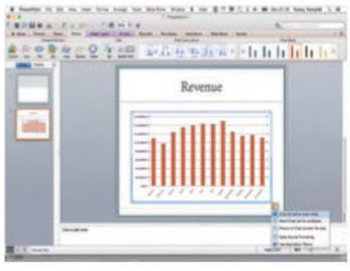
It's getting a little long in the tooth and is overdue for a hefty upgrade sometime in the next year or so, but Microsoft Office 2011 for Mac is the still the de facto standard office suite for the majority of Mac users. If you work in a large organisation, or have dealings with a lot of Windows users, you will almost certainly use Word, Excel, and PowerPoint on a day-to-day basis.

The boxed version of Office 2011 costs just north of £200 for home and business users, but discounted versions are available for those in certain circumstances. And if you acquire it by subscribing to Office 365, you get five computer users and a couple of mobile devices for £80/year, which isn't bad at all.

Live charts in PowerPoint



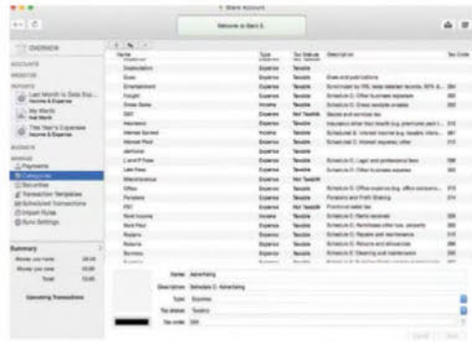
1: Copy your chart
Open up Excel, and then select the chart that you want to appear on your slide in PowerPoint. Press Cmd+C to copy the chart and move it to PowerPoint. Now add a slide to your presentation and click on a placeholder in it.



2: Paste the chart
Now press Cmd+V to paste your chart into your PowerPoint presentation. Click the button at the bottom right of the chart in order to resize it. From the Paste Options, choose Chart (linked to Excel data).

iBank 5

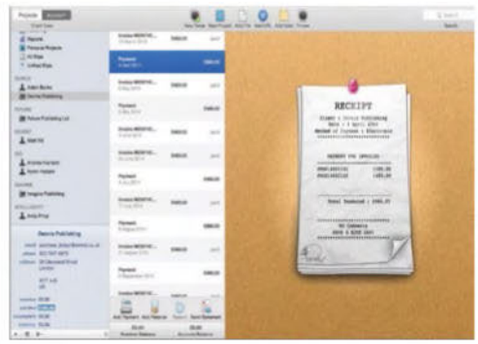
Price: £44.95/$59.99



iBank allows you to download account data from your online bank or add transactions manually. You can track investments, categorise your expenditure so you can figure out why there's always too much month left, and create budgets to help you manage your cash in the future. iBank also allows you to attach receipts to transactions, schedule events with Calendar, and print statements. iBank's interface makes the whole process simple and, while the story it tells might be a little scary, using the app is anything but.

Billings Pro

Price: From $5 per month



Once upon a time, Billings was hands-down the best app on the Mac for tracking time spent on jobs and work done on projects, then using the data to produce beautiful-looking invoices. Its move to a subscription service a couple of years ago wasn't wholly popular, but it's still a brilliant tool for any Mac-based small business or freelancer. It hooks into the Contacts app to make adding client details and updating them easy, and the project organisation is second to none. There are dozens of very good-looking invoice templates which can be customised with your own logo.

"Produce beautiful-looking invoices"

Entertainment

Play games, stream video or just listen to music on your Mac

As brilliant as the Mac is for working on, it's just as great for entertaining. You can play games, watch video, listen to music, or watch slideshows of your favourite photos. And you're not limited to doing any of that on your Mac's screen. Thanks to wireless networking, your Mac can be just the place where your media is stored and where the software playing it runs. You can view the video or listen to the music anywhere in the house.

Some of the best videogames on any platform now run on OS X, and they look incredibly on the Retina display on a MacBook, MacBook Pro, or iMac.

If TV is more your thing, you can do that. There's Netflix, of course, and both Sky and Virgin Media have on-demand services that work in a browser on the Mac. But perhaps the real jewel in the crown is the BBC's iPlayer, which allows you to stream, and now download, BBC programmes on your Mac.

BBC iPlayer Downloader

Price: Free

A replacement for the now defunct BBC iPlayer Mac app, this is a tool for playing shows downloaded from the BBC's iPlayer web app. You can no longer stream programmes, or watch live TV in the app, but that all works very well on the iPlayer website anyway. It's particularly useful if you travel a lot with a MacBook and find yourself in hotel rooms with nothing to watch. You can download shows before you go, take them with you, then watch them in the app.

"Watch downloaded shows in the app"

Plex Media Server

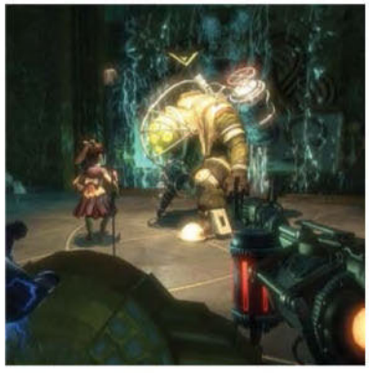
Price: Free

Plex Media Server is a fantastic service that allows you to stream anything, from music to movies and photos, from your Mac to another device. This could be an iOS device, smart TV, Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV, games console, or just about anything else that you can connect to Wi-Fi and hook up to a screen.

If you're planning on going somewhere without an internet connection, you can also choose to sync some content to Plex and then take it on the go with you on either an iPhone or an iPad.

Plex also offers an extensive interface for managing your content. You can create playlists and share them, move from one device to another and keep your place if you're halfway through a film or TV show, and view content from the likes of Vevo directly.

"Stream music, movies and photos from your Mac to just about any device with a screen"



BioShock 2

Price: £14.99/$19.99

Set ten years after the events of the original *BioShock*, this excellent sequel sees the undersea city of Rapture in the hands of a collectivist cult, who plan to transform your beloved Little Sister Eleanor into a genetically engineered messiah. Your job is simple: to stop them, save Eleanor, and get out of Rapture alive, if you can.

Part shooter, part roleplay, *BioShock 2* requires you to engage in stealth, as well as go into battle, in order to save the day. Do you destroy your enemies or forgive them?

BioShock 2's breathtaking graphics are disturbing and awe-inspiring in equal measure and its stunning gameplay makes it a must for any Mac gamer.

Toast 12

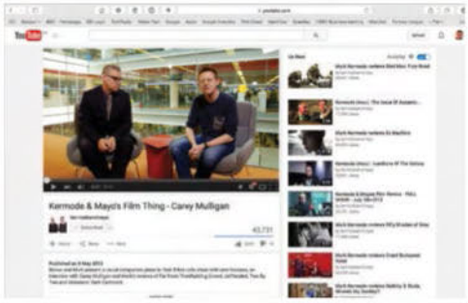
Price: £59.99/$99.99 (£119.99/$149.99 for Pro version)

Toast started life as a way to burn CDs, and then DVDs. It can still do that, but it offers much more besides. It can convert video from one format to another, for example, and even extract video from a video streaming website and download it. And you can even make screen recordings.

If you have a high-definition video camera, it can extract the files from the camera's SD card and convert those, and can burn HD video to DVD.

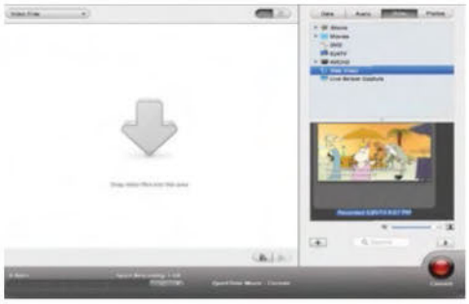
The Pro version includes tools for retouching photo portraits, creating slideshows, cleaning up audio, and adding soundtracks.

"Burn discs, convert video, download it from streaming sites and more"



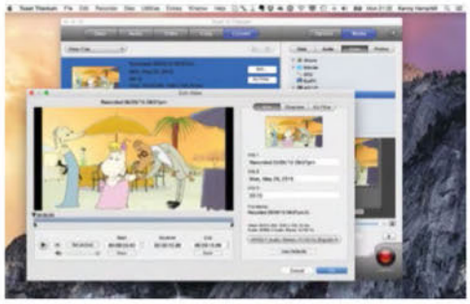
1: Find a video

Go to YouTube or another video sharing site and find a video you want to capture. If it starts automatically, stop it and rewind.



2: Get ready to Toast

In Toast 12, click on the Convert tab. Click on Media, then Web video. If Toast recognises the video, it will display it.



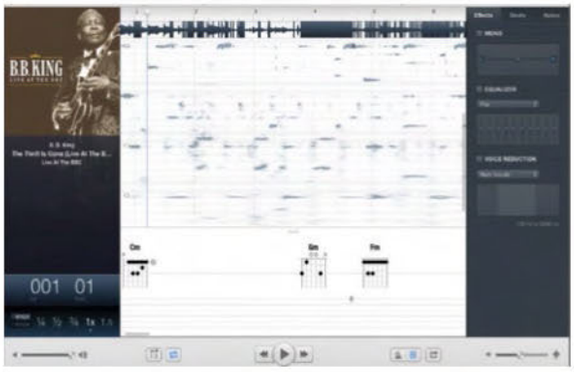
3: Start the video

When the video displays in Toast's window, start playing it in your web browser. Toast will start 'recording' it.

1: Create a new song

First off, launch Capo and search around for a song on your Mac you want to learn. Then drag the file for the song onto the Capo window.

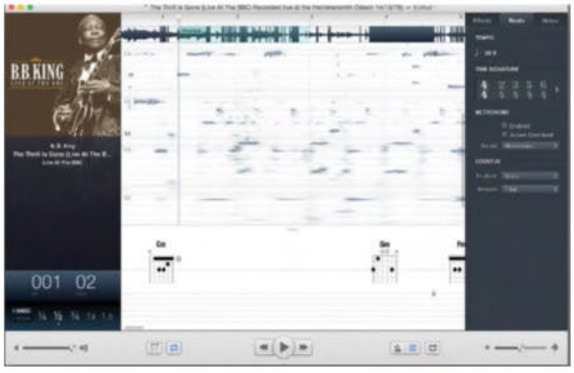
When the file opens up in the app, press play and it will play and the software will attempt to identify the chords automatically. You can drag the slider at the bottom right of the window in order to increase the size of the waveform, which can make it easier to see what's going on.



2: Slow down and loop

Pause the song you've chosen when the player reaches the section that you want to attempt to learn first. Then, at the bottom left of the Capo window, drag the speed slider to 1/4.

After this, you need to click and drag your cursor over the specific section of the waveform that you want to learn and then press the loop button. The selected section will now play at a slower speed and loop repeatedly so you can take your time and gradually pick it up.



Capo 3

Price: £22.99/$29.99

Remember the days when learning a song on the guitar meant sitting next to a cassette player with a notepad and pen and pressing pause and rewind every few seconds? No, probably not. Even if you learn songs from YouTube, however, Capo has plenty to offer.

Import any music file in MP3, M4A, WAV or AIFF format and Capo will immediately start interpreting it. After a few seconds, it displays a waveform of the audio, along with a Spectrogram which attempts to transcribe notes and chords. It does a pretty good job, too. You can slow sections down to quarter speed without changing the pitch, and select sections to loop so you can really nail them.

If you tell it you're using an alternative guitar tuning, Capo will alter the chord shapes it displays accordingly. A terrific tool for learning any song.

"Slow music down without changing the pitch"

Graphics & Design

Apps help you create stunning digital masterpieces

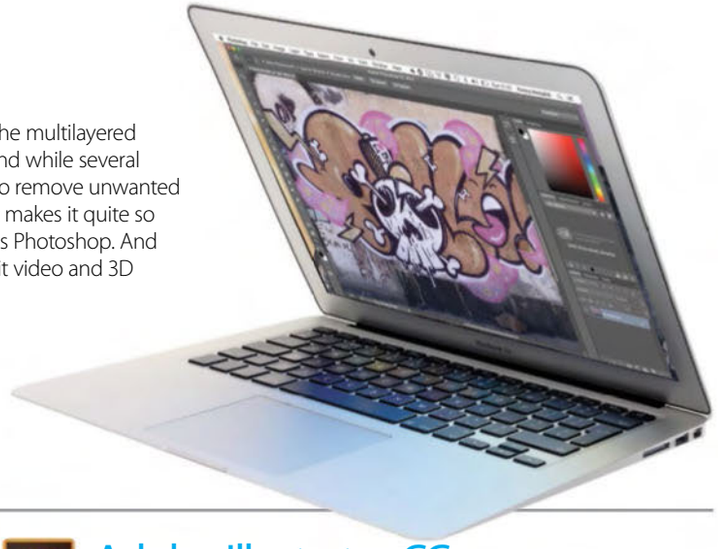
If the Mac is known for anything, it's for its popularity among creative professionals. In the early days, that meant graphic designers and print publishers. Today they've been joined by web designers, video producers and app builders. But graphics and design are still what the Mac does better than any other platform and the applications we've highlighted here reinforce that, from stalwarts of the Mac like Photoshop and Illustrator to revolutionary newcomers like Affinity Designer and Hype. Between them they cover a wide range of prices, features and skill sets. There are areas of graphics and design we haven't been able to cover, like 3D modelling and animation, and architecture. But the Mac is well catered for in those disciplines too. The great news is that it's perfectly possible to build an arsenal of seriously impressive design apps for little more than £100.

Adobe Photoshop CC

Price: From £8.57/$9.99 per month

One of the oldest applications on the Mac, Photoshop has evolved from a tool which allowed photographers to touch up images into the de facto standard tool for professional designers. Whether you want to mock up a website, design a magazine cover, or make visuals for a video, Photoshop is the tool of choice.

It pioneered masking and the multilayered approach to image editing. And while several other applications allow you to remove unwanted bits from a photograph, none makes it quite so easy or has as many options as Photoshop. And these days it allows you to edit video and 3D images, too.



"Photoshop pioneered masking and the multilayered approach to image editing"

Adobe Illustrator CC

Price: From £17.15/$19.99 per month

Whereas Adobe's Photoshop software allows you to edit images pixel by pixel, Illustrator differs in that it allows you to create drawn artwork that can be scaled indefinitely without ever pixelating or looking fuzzy. Admittedly it's not the easiest application to get to grips with, and its Bézier drawing tools seem positively arcane until you work out how to use them. Master it, however, and the results are stunning.

In recent versions, Adobe has updated Illustrator with a number of snazzy new tools, including utensils to help with the creation of 3D drawings and with the conversion of photographs to vector images, which can then be tweaked and edited extensively in the software.

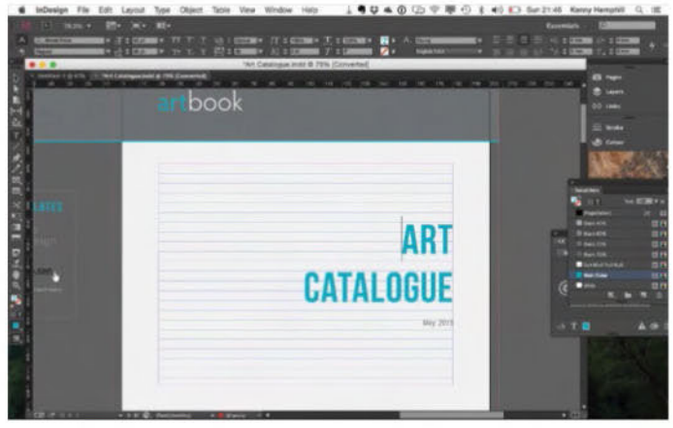
Adobe InDesign CC

Price: From £17.15/$19.99 per month

Once upon a time, QuarkXpress was king of the castle when it came to designing and laying out print publications. Then, along came Adobe with InDesign, and pretty soon everything changed. Integration with tools that designers were already using, like Photoshop and Illustrator, helped it overtake its rival.

Nowadays it's as likely to be used for creating pages for digital platforms as it is for printed magazines. Better still, if you're designing content for print and digital, you can lay it out once in InDesign and have the application output PDFs and formats for tablets and other digital platforms.

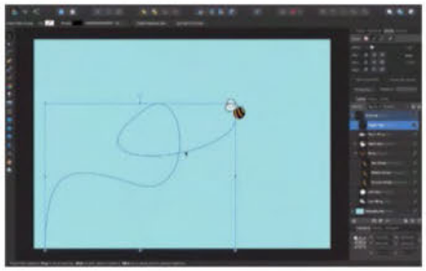
"Create pages for digital platforms as well as printed magazines"



Affinity Designer

Price: £29.99/$39.99

It's not often an app comes along that causes creative professionals to get really excited. But that's what Affinity Designer did when it arrived last year. A vector drawing application that revolutionises the way drawing applications work, Affinity Designer combines the best of raster- and vector-based tools, and adds support for Retina displays to boot.

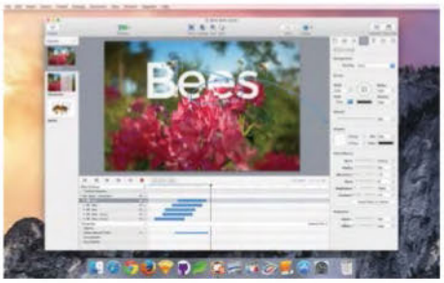


Hype 3

Price: £39.99/$49.99

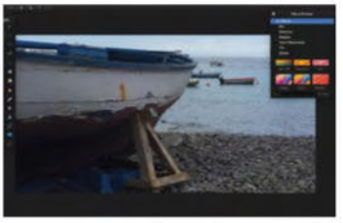
Modern digital design needs modern tools, and Hype is one of the best. It's a what-you-see-is-what-you-get editor for animated, interactive HTML5 content. Whether you want to make content for websites, digital magazines, apps, adverts or video, Hype makes it easy to create stunning visuals.

Its keyframe-based animation watches your every move as you record, and creates key frames automatically when needed. Integrate audio and video, cutting-edge effects and add Google fonts. You can even add swipe and touch gestures for mobile devices. If you want to add your own code, you can do that too. And when you're done, Hype exports state-of-the-art HTML5.



Pixelmator

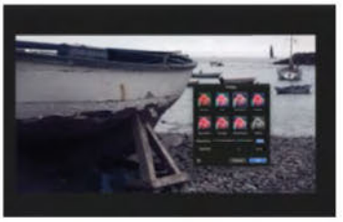
Price: £22.99/$29.99



1: Add an effect

First, open up your chosen photo in Pixelmator, either by dragging the image file directly onto the Pixelmator icon, or by choosing the Open option from the File menu.

Now go to the View menu and click the Show Effects option (or alternatively press Cmd+2) to show the Effects window. From here, you can go to Favourites and drag the Vintage effect onto the photo.



2: Adjust the effect

You can now choose one of the preset variations of the Vintage effect by clicking on each of them, one by one, and deciding which you like best.

When you've chosen your favourite option, drag the saturation slider in order to adjust the colour, and the Vignette slider to adjust the level of the vignette. With these tools you can create exactly the effect that you're looking for.

Comic Life 3

Price: £22.99/$29.99

Imagine taking a bunch of your favourite photos and turning them into a comic book on your Mac. Well, you don't have to imagine it, Comic Life lets you do just that. You can choose from one of several pre-made templates and just add your own photos, speech bubbles and effects. Or you can lay out a comic from scratch. The type styles replicate classic comics brilliantly, and the effects you can apply to your photos make them look more like comic-book drawings, too. There's a script editor to allow you to write your story, plus advanced graphics options like brush strokes, fill effects and opacity controls. And the fantastic easy-to-get-to-grips-with user interface is the cherry on top.

"The type styles replicate classic comics brilliantly"

Productivity

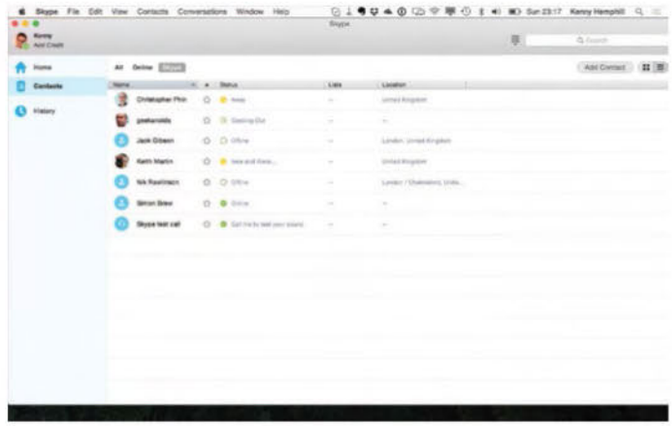
The best apps to help you get things done on your Mac

Whether you're a compulsive list-maker or not, there are several apps on the Mac that can help you get more done. Some of them, like Things, adhere closely to David Allen's 'Get Things Done' philosophy, while others take a more free-form approach to helping you be more productive.

Getting more done isn't all about making lists, however: you need to perform the tasks on the list. And a good task manager will help with that too, by alerting you when the tasks are due. Not all the apps here are about managing your workload: some of them help you be more productive in other ways, say, by enabling you to have meetings at your desk rather than travelling overseas, or by allowing you to manage files on remote servers. And the last one, Scrivener, is a must if you spend much of your day writing, whether it's books, scripts or any other long document.

Skype

Price: Free



Apple's FaceTime is great for talking to other Mac users, but if you want to talk to those not on an Apple device, Skype is where it's at. Incorporating a text chat client, as well as offering the ability to make free voice or video calls to other Skype users, Skype also allows you to call any phone on the planet, provided you have credit in your account. You can set up a special Skype number for other people to call you, and there's voicemail too.

Call quality used to be unreliable, but it's now so good that Skype is even used for live radio, and sometimes even TV, interviews.

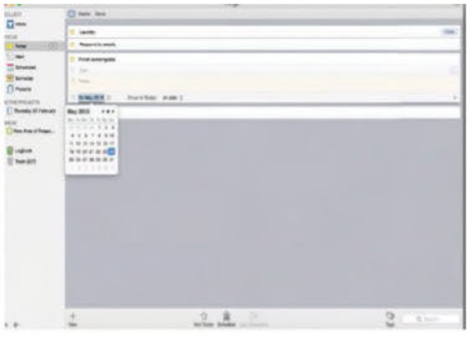
"Skype also allows you to call any phone on the planet"

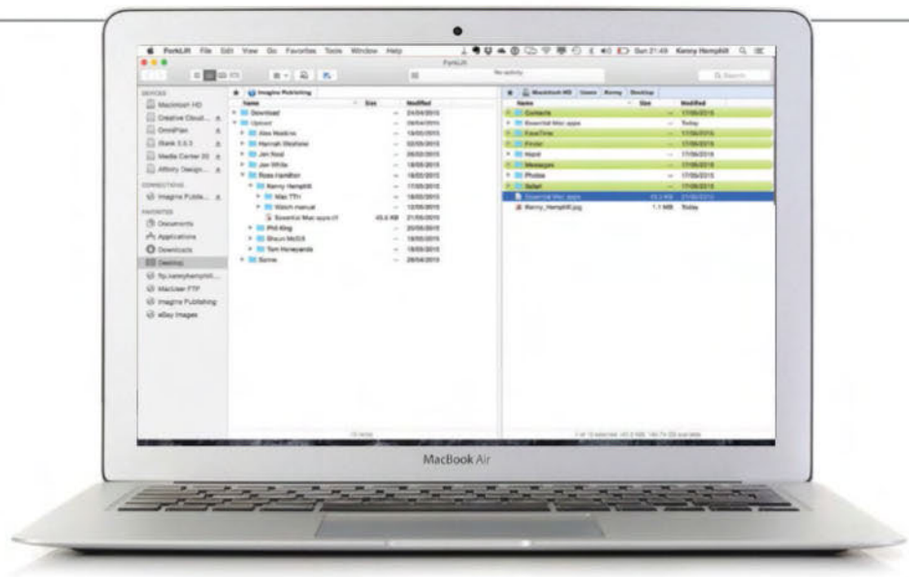
Things

Price: £39.99/$49.99

The Mac App Store is packed full to the brim with to-do list apps, but while the majority of them offer broadly similar functionality, Things manages to set itself apart thanks to its beautifully designed user interface, its ability to sync with its equally impressive iPhone and iPad apps, and its brand new Watch app.

Not only that, but the app also offers a Notification Centre widget, and a Quick Entry window for getting list items out of your head and into the app as quickly and painlessly as possible. Things' incredibly useful Today list allows you to see exactly what your most pressing tasks are right now, so you can focus on those, while support for tags makes finding related tasks completely seamless.





ForkLift

Price: £14.99/$19.99

ForkLift is a fantastically useful tool for transferring files between your Mac and another remote location. That location can be anything, from an FTP or WebDAV server, SMB, AFP, or even an Amazon S3 space.

The app's dual-pane interface means that you can easily drag and drop files and folders between your Mac and the remote server with absolutely no hassle whatsoever. And the ability to create favourites means that it only takes a double-click to connect to your most-used locations.

You can even use ForkLift to edit text files remotely using your chosen text editor, and support for Quick Look means that you can swiftly and easily preview remote files. You can synchronise entire folders, as well. But best of all, and most importantly for those on a tight schedule, file transfer is very, very fast indeed.

Scrivener

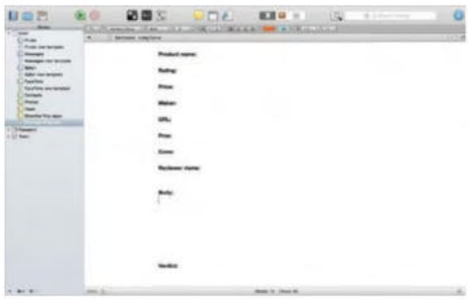
Price: £34.99/$44.99

There are writing apps and there are writing apps. While Microsoft Word is great for long documents which are full of references and need a bibliography, and something like Byword is brilliant for distraction-free writing, neither comes close to Scrivener when it comes to organising chunks of text and reference material.

Whether you're writing a novel, screenplay, or a feature like this one, Scrivener's organisational tools are second to none.

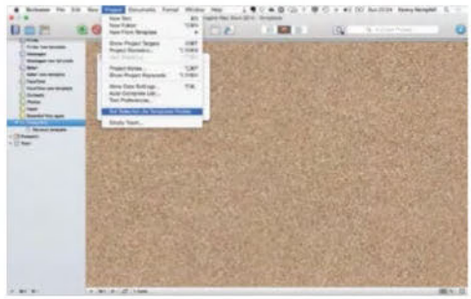
It enables you to easily create outlines and view snippets on a corkboard. In addition, there are several free templates pre-loaded, including one for BBC radio plays.

"Whatever you're writing, Scrivener's organisational tools are second to none"



1: Create template

Click '+' to add a new text document. Create the template you want to use for other documents by typing headings and creating sections.



2: Create folder

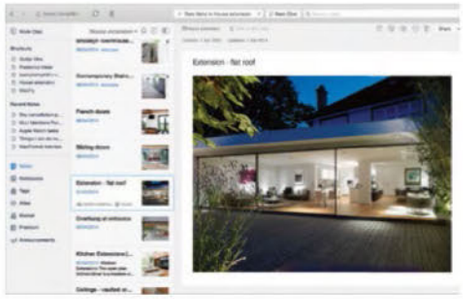
Click and hold '+' and select New Folder; name it 'Templates'. Drag the template document onto it. Go to Project>Set Selection as Templates Folder.

3: Choose the template

The folder will turn blue with a white 'T' on it. Every document you put in there will now be designated as a template. To open one, hold '+' and choose it.

Evernote

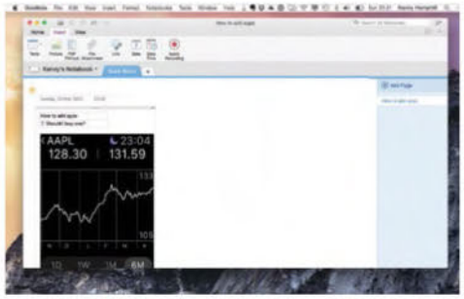
Price: Free (premium version available)



Evernote allows you to create notes, grab snippets from websites, and scan in documents. It syncs everything across your devices, and performs OCR to create searchable text.

Microsoft OneNote

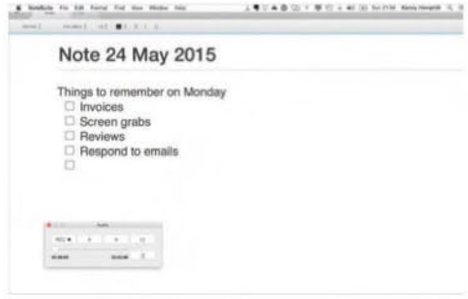
Price: Free



OneNote is focused on creating your own notes, so there's no web clipper. You can, though, create and style free-form notes, add images, and can record and play back audio notes.

NoteSuite

Price: £3.99/$4.99

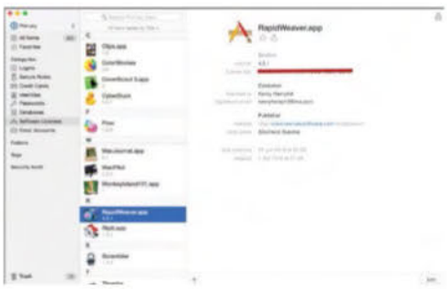


NoteSuite stores notes on your Mac, rather than its servers, has built-in PDF annotation, a task manager and a web clipper. It also allows you to make audio recordings.

Utilities

Want to store passwords securely or access OS X's hidden features?

Utilities is a category that covers a wide range of tools and we've tried to represent that here. There's a tool that lets you store passwords and credit card details securely, with military-grade encryption. And there's an app that allows you to pull back the covers of OS X and peer beneath its surface to access controls and settings that would normally require you to fire up Terminal and start typing commands. There's also a Twitter client that goes above and beyond just allowing you to tweet, read your timeline, and favourite, reply and send direct messages. It's so good, Twitter bought it a few years ago and now offers it alongside its own client. And last, but certainly not least, there's a blogging tool that allows you to write posts, add images and do all the things you'd expect from a blogging app, before uploading to WordPress and sharing it with the world.



1Password

Price: £39.99/$49.99

Remembering passwords is the modern-day version of trying to keep all your friends' phone numbers in your head. Don't write them down, we're told. Make them strong and difficult to guess, though. How do you create a strong password but not write it down? The answer is to use a password manager, and 1Password is the best on the Mac. As well as allowing you to store passwords securely, it will fill them in for you when you arrive at a website, generate new passwords, and allow you to store encrypted credit card and bank account details, too. Best of all, it syncs with the iOS version.

"The best on the Mac"

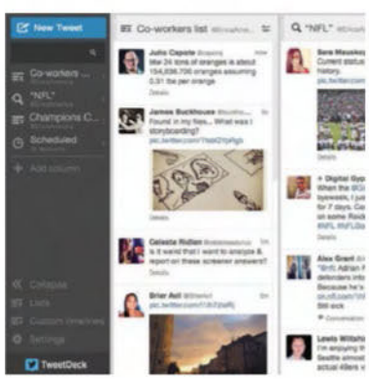
MacPilot 7

Price: £18.99/$29.95

MacPilot 7 is a frighteningly powerful app that enables you to dig deep into your Mac's system in order to make tweaks and adjustments to the way things work in OS X. It can be a huge time saver, as most of these features would otherwise be hidden deep within preference panes and dialog boxes or alternatively need to be initiated from Terminal.

Among the more useful customisation options offered by MacPilot 7 are the ability to alter the frequency of Time Machine backups and the option to stop QuickTime Player and Preview from automatically opening the files which had been open when you last quit. With MacPilot 7 in your apps folder, you'll soon be taking control of your Mac in ways you never thought were possible.

"Dig deep into your Mac's system to make tweaks and adjustments"



TweetDeck

Price: Free

Whether you manage multiple accounts, or just like to keep track of your lists, mentions, and direct messages without clicking through from one to the other, TweetDeck is the perfect solution.

The app's best feature is its multi-column user interface: you can decide what you want to put in each column, whether it's feeds from multiple accounts or different views of the same account. But that's not all that TweetDeck has to offer. Another favourite feature is the ability to schedule tweets – extremely useful if you run a Twitter account for marketing purposes.

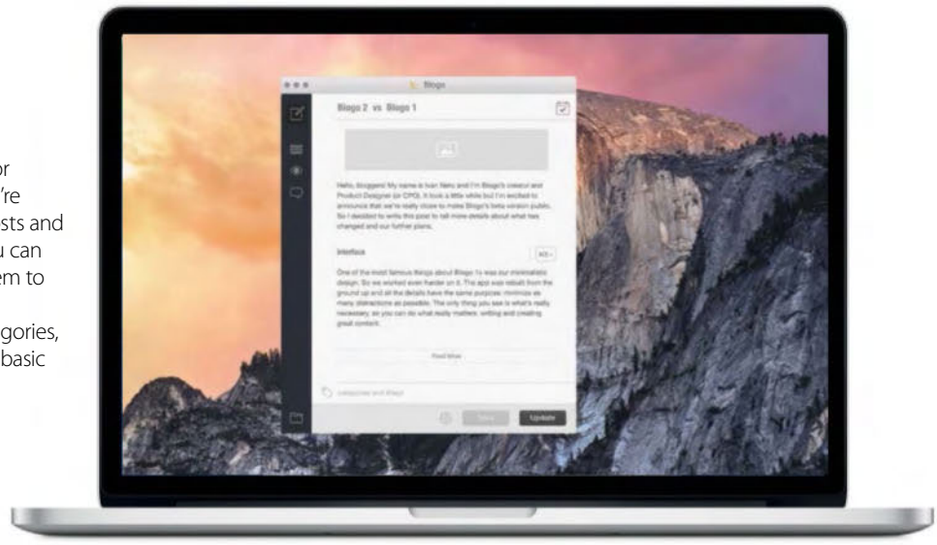
For businesses and individuals alike, TweetDeck is an excellent tool for anyone who takes Twitter seriously.

Blogo

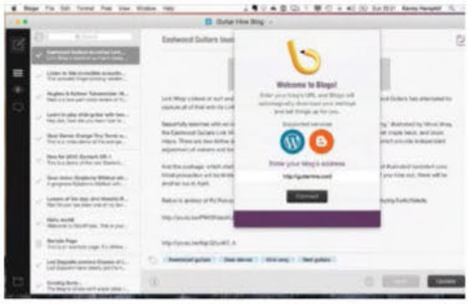
Price: £14.99/$19.99

If you have a WordPress blog, you'll know that using its built-in editor is far from ideal. Apart from anything else, it's inaccessible when you're offline. Blogo is a visual editing tool for WordPress blogs. Existing posts and pages are downloaded as soon as you add a blog to Blogo, and you can create new ones, save them as drafts, preview them and upload them to WordPress. There's also a scheduling tool.

You can add images and format text, as well as add tags and categories, and allow or disallow comments for each post. And there are some basic image-editing tools, too.

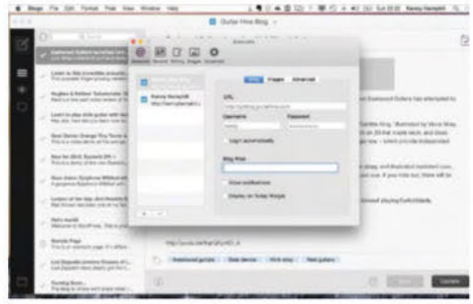


"Blogo is a visual editing tool for WordPress blogs"



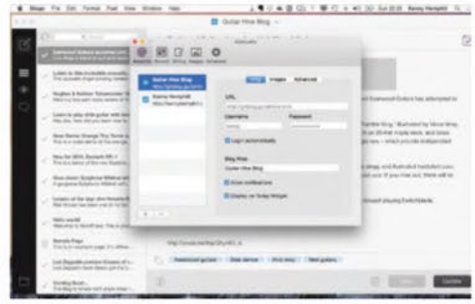
1: Add a new blog

Launch Blogo and open Preferences from the Blogo menu. Click on Accounts, then click the '+' at the bottom.



2: Type in blog credentials

Click the Blog tab and type in your blog's URL and your username and password. Tick the 'Log in automatically' option.



3: Finish adding the blog

Decide whether you want to include alerts from this blog in Notifications Centre or the Today widget and tick as appropriate.

1: Set up your recording

To begin, click on the Camtasia icon in the menu bar and then select the Start Recording option.

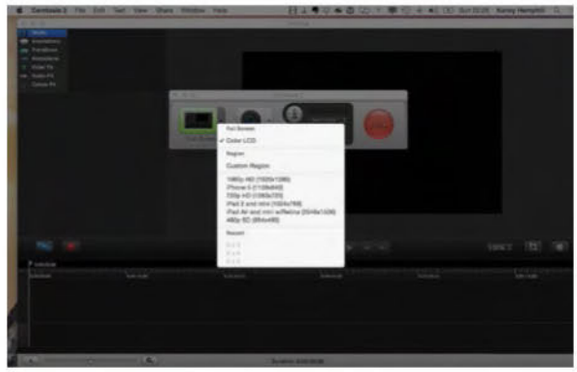
In the dialog box that subsequently appears, you can choose whether you want to record the screen in its entirety, a specific, preset-sized section, or a custom-sized selection.

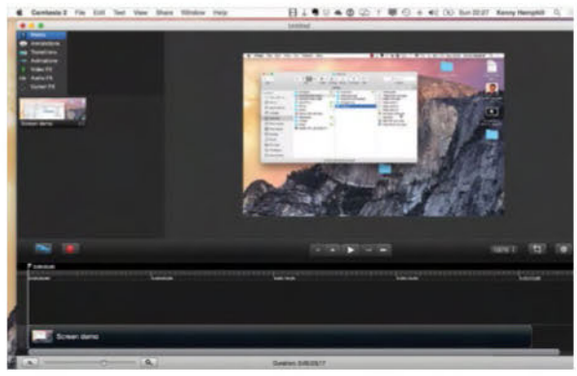
Click on the left-hand button and choose the menu item that corresponds with your choice, and you're ready to start capturing some on-screen action.

2: Record your screen

On Camtasia's various other menus, you can choose whether you want to include video from your Mac's FaceTime camera, or audio from its microphone, or its system audio, depending on what your specific requirements might be.

When you've done all that, press the Record button. When you've finished capturing everything you need, select Pause Recording from the menu bar item. Finally, you can give the recording a name and press Save.





Camtasia for Mac

Price: £78.29/$99

Camtasia allows you to make screen recordings for training, video reviews or for including in a presentation. You can record the whole of your Mac's screen or just a section you specify. In addition, you can choose to record system sounds, input from the microphone, or both.

As soon as you've recorded something, it's added to the library in Camtasia and you can then add more recordings and drag them onto the timeline to build a movie, in the same way that you would put clips together in iMovie. Editing tools include the ability to trim clips, adjust audio levels, and add graphics and effects.

Once you've finished editing a recording, you can export it in one of a number of formats, or share it online to one of a number of video sites, all from within the app.

"Drag recordings onto the timeline to build a movie"

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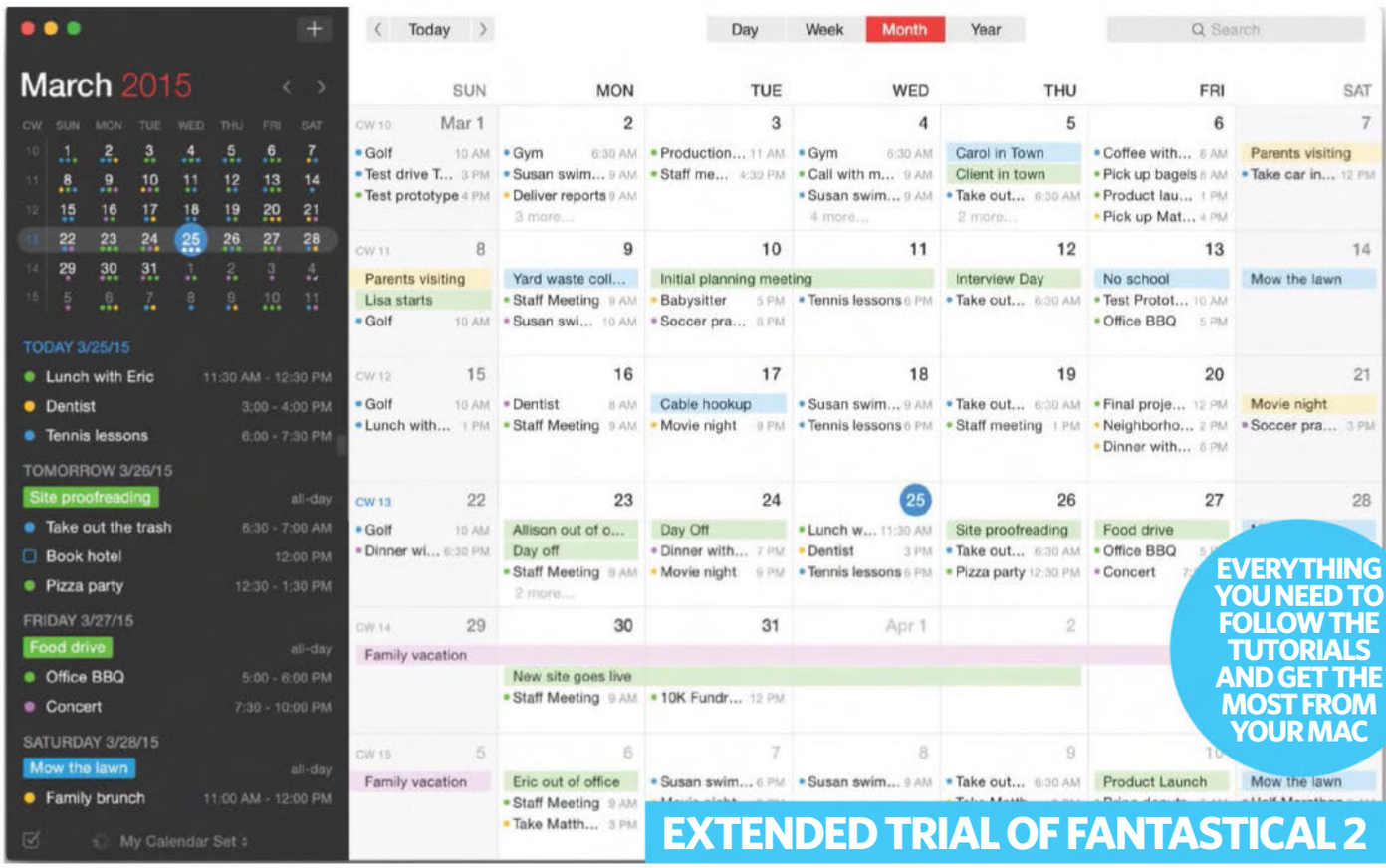

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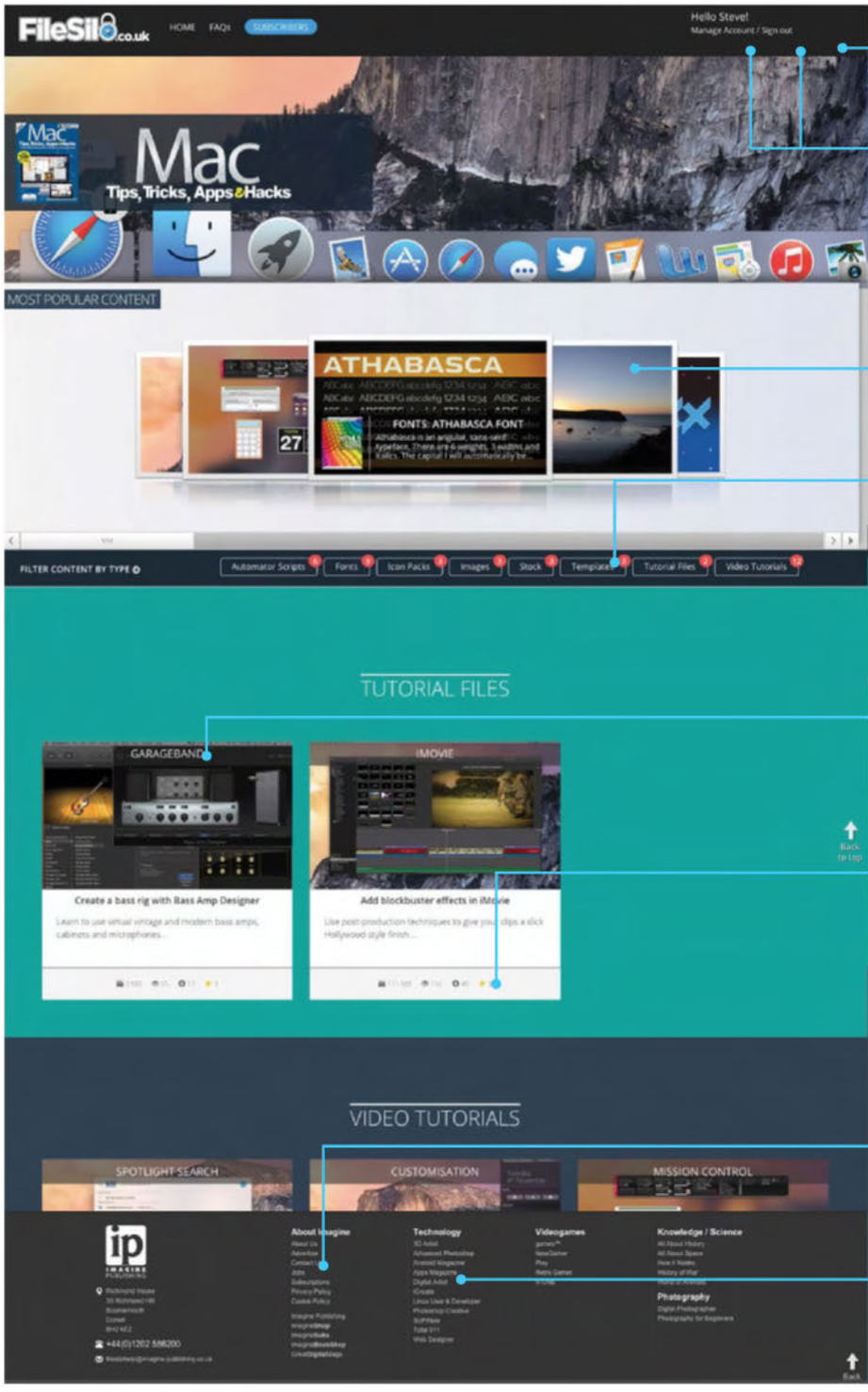

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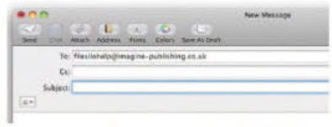

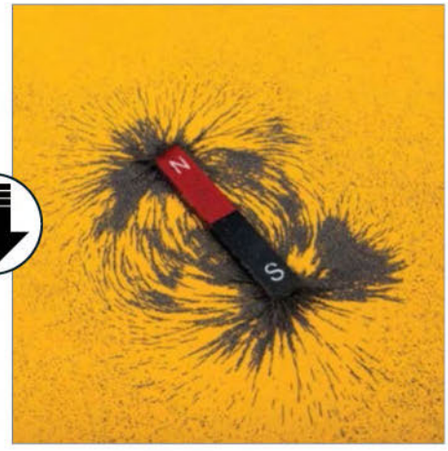

NEED HELP WITH THE TUTORIALS?

Having trouble with any of the techniques in this bookazine's tutorials? Don't know how to make the best use of your free resources? Want to have your questions answered by those in the know? Then why not visit the iCreate Magazine and Imagine Bookazines Facebook pages for all your questions, concerns and qualms? There is a friendly and active community of fellow Apple enthusiasts waiting to help you out, as well as regular posts and updates from the team behind iCreate magazine. Like us today and start chatting, sharing your work, and getting involved with one of the brightest fantasy art communities on the web!

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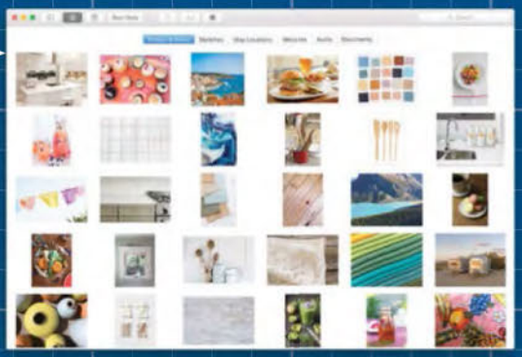
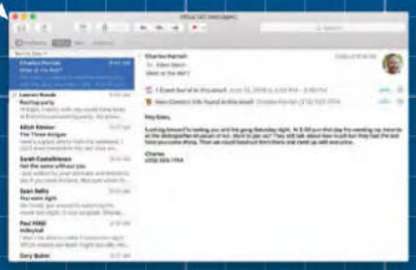
Mac

Tips, Tricks, Apps & Hacks

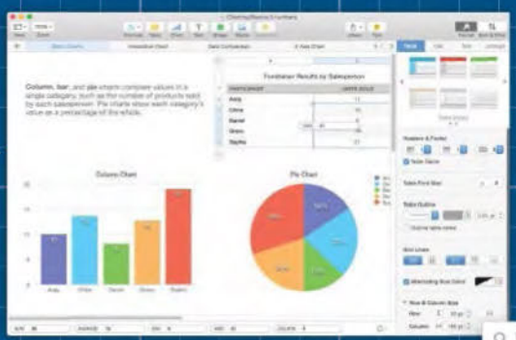
The independent guide to mastering your Apple Mac



Customise every app to your liking

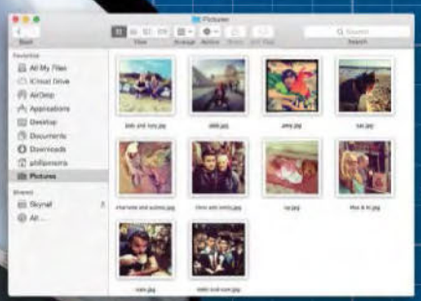


Discover Mail's hidden features

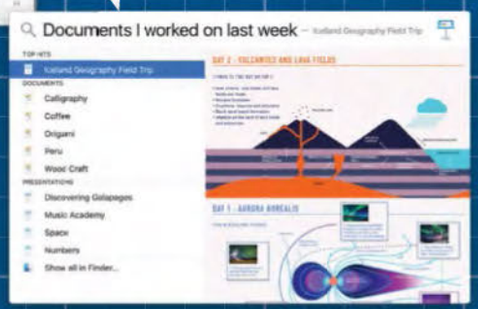


Get the most from iWork

For all OS X versions



Back up your photo library to the cloud



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